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CHAUCER.

Al yogh his lyfe he quey nt ne resemblaunce
Of him hay in me so stresslı lyflynesse,
Yat to putte othir men in remembzaunce
Of his yfonez haue heere his lykenesse
Ne make to pis end in sothfastnesse;
Yat pei yt haue of him left yought Empryde
By pis peynture may ageyn him fyde.

THE
POETICAL WORKS OF
GEOFFREY CHAUCER

WITH MEMOIR BY SIR HARRIS NICOLAS

VOL I

LONDON
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See an article in Macmillan's Magazine for March 1873 "Hard work at Chaucer" by F. J. Furnivall who thinks he was born about 1340

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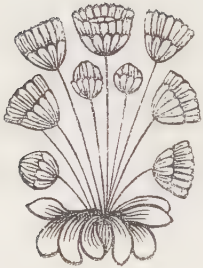
THE MEMOIR OF CHAUCER.

TO HUDSON GURNEY, ESQ.

F.R.S.: V.P.S.A.

This MEMOIR of CHAUCER is inscribed, as a sincere though inadequate Testimony of the esteem, respect, and regard of his Friend,

N. HARRIS NICOLAS.



Life of Chaucer.

BY SIR HARRIS NICOLAS.

"————— That renownmed Poet
Dan Chaucer, Well of English undefyled,
On Fame's eternall beadroll worthie to be fyled:"
Spenser.

ALTHOUGH great trouble was taken to illustrate the life of Chaucer by his former biographers,[1] the field of research was but imperfectly gleaned. Many material facts in his history have been very recently brought to light, and are now, for the first

[1] Godwin, in his Life of Geoffrey Chaucer, (2 vols. 4to. 1803; second edition, 4 vols. 8vo. 1804), speaking of searches among the Public Records, says, "In this sort of labour I had been indefatigable," but "after all my diligence, I am by no means confident that I may not have left some particulars to be gleaned by the compilers who shall come after me." 8vo. vol. i. p. xiii. Copies of most of the Records he had seen are printed at length in the Appendix to that work, and are marked in the Notes to this Memoir by the letter G, the omission of which letter shows distinctly what has been since discovered.

time, published; but it is not from these discoveries only that this account of the Poet will derive its claim to attention. An erroneous construction has been given to much of what was before known of him; and absurd inferences have, in some cases, been drawn from supposed allusions to himself in his writings. A Life of the Poet, founded on documentary evidence instead of imagination, was much wanted; and this, it is hoped, the present Memoir will supply.

Chaucer's parentage is unknown, and the conjectures that have been hazarded on the subject are too vague to justify the adoption of any of them.[2] His name, which was of some antiquity, was borne by persons in a respectable station in society; and it is likely that some of them were connected with the city of London.[2] That he was of a gentleman's, though not of a noble or distinguished family, can scarcely be doubted; but the frequent occurrence of passages in his writings, wherein he insists that conduct is the only proof of gentility, that he alone is truly noble who acts nobly, with others of a similar import, may possibly be ascribed to his desire to level the artificial distinctions of birth, from the consciousness of being, in that respect, inferior to those of whom his talents

[2] For all the information that has been collected respecting persons of the name of Chaucer, see Note A. at the end of this Memoir.

had rendered him the associate. Upon a supposed reference to himself in one of his works, he is considered to have been born in London;[3] but, as will afterwards appear, no reliance can be placed on that passage.

The time of his birth has been much discussed,[4] in consequence of a deposition made by him at Westminster, in October 1386, in the remarkable controversy between Richard Lord Scrope and Sir Robert Grosvenor, that he was of the age of "forty and upwards," and "had been armed twenty-seven years." If by this statement it were meant that he was then only a little more than forty years old, he would have been born about 1345, whereas the birth of the Poet had been always hitherto assigned to the year 1328. There are strong reasons, derived from many passages in his own works, and in the writings of Gower and Occleve, (some of which will be afterwards cited), for believing that he was born long before 1345; and the mistakes in the ages of the deponents on that occasion, some of whom are stated to have

[3] "Also the citye of London that is to me so dere and swete, in which I was forth growen; and more kindely love have I to that place, than to any other in yerth, as every kindly creture hath full appetite to that place of his kindely engendure, and to wilne reste and pece in that stede to abide." "Testament of Love," book i. sect. 5. See the remarks in a subsequent page on this and other imaginary references to himself in that work.

[4] Godwin's Life of Chaucer, 8vo. vol. i. p. xxi. et seq.

been ten, and others even twenty years younger than they really were, prevents Chaucer's deposition from being conclusive on the point. Indeed, it would appear that the precise age of the deponents was not deemed of much consequence, and was inserted only as a matter of form; but that the time they had served in the field being essential, because their personal knowledge of the fact in dispute greatly depended thereon, it was probably accurately represented. Chaucer, therefore, may have been ten, or even fifteen years above forty in 1386, which would make the period of his birth nearly agree with the date usually assigned to it. He had, he said, borne arms for twenty-seven years; so that assuming him to have been about fifty-five when examined at Westminster, he did not commence his military career until 1359, at which time he would have been above twenty-eight years of age.

Some of Chaucer's biographers suppose that he was educated at Oxford, and some again, at Cambridge;[5] while others solve the doubt, more ingeniously than probably, by concluding that he was at both Universities;

[5] Upon the doubtful authority of a line in the "Court of Love," (l. 913,) in which he is supposed to speak of himself as "Philogenet of Cambridge, Clerk," it has been concluded that he was educated at that University; "but," as is well observed in the Edinburgh Review (vol. ii. p. 433), "we cannot see how the acknowledged

but there is no proof, however likely it may be, that he belonged to either.

It has been said that Chaucer was originally intended for the law, and that from some cause which has not reached us, and on which it would be idle to speculate, the design was abandoned. The acquaintance he possessed with the classics, with divinity, with astronomy, with so much as was then known of chemistry, and indeed with every other branch of the scholastic learning of the age, proves that his education had been particularly attended to; and his attainments render it impossible to believe that he quitted college at the early period at which persons destined for a military life usually began their career. It was not then the custom for men to pursue learning for its own sake; and the most rational manner of accounting for the extent of Chaucer's acquirements is to suppose that he was educated for a learned profession. The knowledge he displays of divinity would make it more likely that he was intended for the Church than for the Bar, were it not that the writings of the Fathers were generally read by all classes of students. One writer says

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falsehood of one part of this designation can possibly prove the truth of the rest; or why Chaucer may not have invented a fictitious character to be attached to a false name." Leland says he was of Oxford; but his account of Chaucer is too full of mistakes to be entitled to any credit.

that Chaucer was a member of the Inner Temple, and that while there he was fined two shillings for beating a Franciscan friar in Fleet Street,[6] and another observes, that after he had travelled in France, "collegia leguleiorum frequentavit.[7]" Nothing, however, is positively known of Chaucer until the autumn of 1359, when he himself says he was in the army with which Edward the Third invaded France, and that he served for the first time on that occasion. He was, he adds, made prisoner by the French during the expedition which terminated with the peace of Chartres in May 1360. Between 1360 and 1367 no notice has been found of him, so that it is alike uncertain if he was ransomed, and when he returned to England.

In 1367 Chaucer was one of the "Valets of the King's Chamber," or, as the Office was sometimes called, "Valet of the King's Household," a situation always filled by gentlemen; and by the designation of "dilectus Valettus noster," the King, in consideration of his former and future services, granted him, on the 20th of June in that year, an annual salary of twenty marks for life, or until he should be otherwise provided for.[8]

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[6] Speght, who states that a Mr. Buckley had seen a record of the Inner Temple to that effect.

[7] Leland.

[8] Rot. Pat. 41 Edw. III. p. 1. m. 13. Fœdera, N. E. vol. iii. p. 829. G. The payment of this pension on the 6th of November 1367 is the first notice of Chau-

About that time he married Philippa, (one of the "demoiselles" or ladies in attendance on the Queen),[9] who is stated to have been the eldest daughter of Sir Payne Roet, a native of Hainault and King of Arms of Guienne, and sister of Katherine, widow of Sir Hugh Swynford, once the mistress, but subsequently the wife of John of Gaunt Duke of Lancaster. Chaucer received his pension in November 1367, May 1368, and October 1369;[10] and being in the King's service abroad in the summer of 1370, he obtained the usual letters of protection, dated on the 20th of June in that year, to be in force until the ensuing Michaelmas.[11] He must however have returned to England a few months afterwards, because he received in person his half year's pension on the 8th of October, though in April it was paid to Walter Walshe for him;[12] and he also received it himself in 1371 and 1372.[13]

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cer on the Issue Rolls of the Exchequer, (Mich. 42 Edw. III. *Vide* Note B. at the end of the Memoir) and it is most probable that he did not obtain the appointment before June 1367.

[9] See the Remarks on Chaucer's marriage towards the end of this Memoir. Tyrwhitt says it took place in 1360, but he does not refer to any authority.

[10] Issue Rolls of the Exchequer for the 42nd Edw. III. (*Vide* Notes B. and C.) and 43rd Edw. III.

[11] Rot. Pat. 44 Edw. III. p. 2, m. 20. G.

[12] Issue Rolls 44 Edw. III. edited by Frederick Devon, Esq. 8vo. 1835, pp. 19, 289.

[13] Issue Rolls, 45, 46, and 47 Edw. III.

On the 12th of November 1372, Chaucer being then one of the King's Esquires, was joined in a Commission with James Pronam and John de Mari, citizens of Genoa, to treat with the Duke, Citizens, and Merchants of Genoa for the purpose of choosing some port in England where the Genoese might form a commercial establishment.[14]

An advance of 66*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.* was made to Chaucer on the 1st of December 1372, for his expenses,[15] and he left England soon after. All that is known of this mission is that he went to Florence as well as Genoa;[16] that he had returned before the 22nd of November 1373;[16] and that on the 4th of February 1374, he received 25*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.* at the Exchequer, for his expenses while in the King's service at Genoa and Florence in the preceding year.[16]

No circumstance in Chaucer's life has excited so much interest as his proceedings in Italy in 1373, from its having been imagined that he then visited Petrarch at Padua, and obtained from him the pathetic Tale of Griselda, which the Clerk of Oxenford recites during the Canterbury Pilgrimage; an idea entirely founded upon the probability that

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[14] Rot. Franc. 46 Edw. III. m. 8. Fœdera, N. E. vol. iii. p. 964. G.

[15] Issue Roll, Mich. 47 Edw. III. 1373. *Vide* Note D.

[16] He received his pension in person on that day. Issue Roll, Mich. 48 Edw. III. *Vide* Note E.

such a meeting might have taken place, and upon the following lines in the Prologue to the Clerk's Tale:—

"I wol you tell a tale, which that I
Lerned at Padowe of a worthy clerk,
As preved by his wordes and his werk.
He is now ded, and nailed in his cheste,
I pray to God so yeve his soule reste.
FRAUNCEIS PETRARK, the laureat poete,
Highte this clerk, whos rethorike swete
Enlumined all Itaille of poetrie,
As Lynyan did of philosophie,
Or law, or other art particulere:
But deth, that wol not suffre us dwellen here,
But as it were a twinkling of an eye,
Hem both hath slaine, and alle we shul dye.
But forthe to tellen of this worthy man
That taught me this Tale."

It is a natural and generous wish that illustrious men, the ornaments of their several ages and countries, whom Nature, by endowing with kindred minds and her highest intellectual gifts, would seem to have destined for friends, should have been acquainted with each other; and that the admiration inspired by their respective Works should have been warmed and strengthened by personal affection. This universal feeling justifies more attention to the supposed friendship of Chaucer and Petrarch than a merely speculative question would otherwise deserve.

Tyrwhitt, after alluding to Speght's inaccurate statement, that "some write" that Chaucer and Petrarch were present at the

marriage of Lionel Duke of Clarence with Violenta, daughter of Galeazzo Lord of Milan, at that city in 1369, as one occasion when he might have become known to the Italian Poet,[17] proceeds to notice his mission to Genoa in 1372 as having afforded him another opportunity of seeing Petrarch. He briefly discusses the point; but it is evident that he had not formed a conclusive opinion upon it, his doubts being founded on the distance of Genoa from Padua, and on the interview not having been mentioned by Petrarch himself, nor by his biographers. Godwin, however, after answering this objection, vehemently insists that Chaucer did actually visit Petrarch at Padua in 1373, and that he then obtained from him the Tale of Griselda.

In his ardour, Godwin has however both overlooked and mistaken some material circumstances; and his confidence in the fact not only induced him to cast unmerited reproaches upon the learned Tyrwhitt for merely presuming to express a doubt on the subject, but to give the reins to his own imagination by describing Chaucer's motives for seeking the interview, the interview itself, the feelings of the two Poets, and the very

[17] Petrarch was certainly present on that occasion; but the Rolls in the Tower have been examined without finding any evidence that Chaucer was one of the persons who formed the Duke of Clarence's retinue. The names of many of the individuals of the Duke's suite are printed in the Fœdera, N. E. vol. III. pp. 842, 843, 844.

tone and substance of their conversation![18] This interesting question will now, it is hoped, be investigated on more rational grounds.

It is certain that Chaucer was not absent from England quite twelve months; namely, from December 1372 to November 1373, as he probably proceeded on his mission a few days after receiving the expenses for it; and he is likely to have applied for the payment of his pension soon after his return. All that hitherto has been known on this point is, that he was instructed to go to Genoa. It was not even certain that he actually went there; but it now appears that he was not only at Genoa in 1373, but that he was likewise sent on the King's affairs to Florence. Supposing him to have arrived at Genoa in January, to have gone to Florence a month or two afterwards, and to have remained in that city in April and May of that year, there would be nothing inconsistent with dates or probability in thinking that he might have proceeded to Padua, or to any other part of Northern Italy. It is true that in the record of the payment of his expenses in February 1374, he is only said to have been at Genoa and Florence; but this may be explained by those cities being perhaps the only places to which the King had specially sent him; and

[18] Life of Chaucer, vol. i. p. 463, et seq. For proof of the statements in the text see p. 16 antea.

if he went to Padua for his own pleasure, there would be no greater reason for mentioning that city in the Accounts of the Exchequer, than any other place through which he passed on his journey from, or return to England.

Of Petrarch's life in 1373 many circumstances are related, and they too are all consistent with the possibility of his having seen Chaucer at Padua in the spring or summer of that year. Petrarch was at Arquà, near Padua, in January 1373; and he appears to have remained there until September, on the 27th of which month he arrived at Venice to plead the cause of Francesco Novello da Carrara before the Senate. He would seem to have remained at Venice until about March 1374, as he is said to have been taken ill soon after his return to Arquà, to have languished for about four months, and to have died on the 18th, or 19th of July 1374.

The account which Petrarch gives of his translation of the Tale of Griselda in his Letter to Boccaccio, is referred to by Godwin as some evidence that the lines respecting that piece in the Canterbury Tales are to be construed as applying to Chaucer; and if Godwin's extract from that Letter were a faithful version of the original, his argument would have weight. He makes Petrarch write to Boccaccio on the 8th of June 1373, "Your work of the Decameron fell *for the first time* into my hands *in an excursion I made to*

Arquà a few weeks ago,"[19] adding, that he had rendered it into Latin, and that he then sent him the translation.

In the first place, it is proper to observe, that there is no date to the Letter which accompanied the translation, but that, at the conclusion of the Tale itself, these words are added: "Valete amici, valete epistolæ; Inter Colles Euganeos 6 Idus Junii MCCCLXXIIJ."[20] This date is implicitly adopted by Godwin; and though he repeatedly cites the Abbe de Sade's Memoirs of Petrarch, he has altogether omitted to notice that the date assigned to the Letter in that work,[21] (on the authority of a manuscript in the Royal Library at Paris,)[22] is not the 6th Ides of June 1373,

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[19] Life of Chaucer, vol. i. p. 463.

[20] Opera Edit. 1554, p. 601, and Edit. Basle, 1581, p. 547. Two much earlier copies of that Letter are in the British Museum, one in Gothic characters without date, and another printed at Venice in 1493; but in neither of those copies does the latter part of the translation, containing the date, occur. That the date was not printed literally in the editions of 1554 and 1581 is evident from the figure "6" being used instead of a Roman numeral.

[21] Memoires pour la Vie de Petrarque, 4to. tome iii. p. 798.

[22] In the printed Catalogue of the MSS. in the Bibliotheque du Roi, the volumes marked Nos. 8521 and 5919 are said to contain copies of Petrarch's Letter to Boccaccio; but the date is not mentioned. No. 5919 in the Index (p. xciii.) would, however, appear to be an erroneous reference.

but the 6th Ides of June 1374. De Sade so fully relies on the accuracy of the date of 1374 as to call the Letter "perhaps Petrarch's *last* letter;" and the emphatic farewell which the Poet takes in it, alike of his friends and of correspondence, would justify such a construction, if it were really written within six weeks of his decease.[23] Moreover, there is not one word in the original of Petrarch's Letter, nor in his translation of Boccaccio's Tale, to justify Godwin's representation that the Decameron had "fallen into his hands for the first time in an excursion he had made to Arquà a few weeks before," that is, a few weeks before the 8th of June 1373 or 1374. Petrarch's translation is dated "among the Euganean Hills," namely, at Arquà; and it is not likely that a person writing "from Arquà" should have spoken "of an excursion to Arquà." Accordingly nothing of the kind occurs in Petrarch's Letter. All he says to Boccaccio on the subject is: "Librum tuum, quem nostro materno eloquio, ut opinor olim juvenis edidisti, nescio quidem, unde, vel qualiter ad me delatum vidi;" mentioning

[23] Godwin, following De Sade, explains these words by attributing them to Petrarch's disgust at having had his correspondence opened, copied, and pirated, and hence his resolution to write no more; but as no complaint of the kind occurs in the Letter itself, the pathetic conclusion may much more naturally be attributed to his feelings on the approach of death. (Vol. ii. p. 476.)

neither the time when, nor the place where, he first saw the Decameron; nor the time when he had translated the Tale of Griselda. The "first time," the "few weeks," and the "excursion to Arquà," seem therefore to have proceeded from the same prolific fancy which has attempted to supply so many chasms in Chaucer's career.

If Petrarch's Letter does not fix the time of the translation, the accuracy of its date is comparatively immaterial, except so far as it is likely that he should have sent the translation to Boccaccio soon after it was finished; but if it were not made until a few months, still more until "a few weeks," before June 1374, it is perfectly evident that he could not have given his version of the Tale to Chaucer at Padua before September 1373, when Petrarch went to Venice; nor before the November following, in which month Chaucer was unquestionably in England.

The truth is, however, that the precise time when Petrarch translated the Tale of Griselda is uncertain; though his version of it was probably made before the period, in 1373, when Chaucer might have obtained it from him at Padua, so that the interview and the communication of the Tale are both possible if not probable events. Chaucer is considered to have been well acquainted with the Decameron; and Godwin asks, with some pertinency, why he chose to confess his obligation for the Tale to Petrarch rather than to

Boccaccio, from whose volume Petrarch confessedly translated it?—questions which Godwin himself thus answers, "For this very natural reason because he was eager to commemorate his interview with this venerable patriarch of Italian letters, and to record the pleasure he had reaped from his society. Chaucer could not do this more effectually than by mentioning his having learned from the lips of Petrarch a tale which had been previously drawn up and delivered to the public by another." Confident in this theory, Godwin triumphantly adds, "We may defy all the ingenuity of criticism to invent a different solution for the simple and decisive circumstance of Chaucer's having gone out of his way in a manner which he has employed on no other occasion, to make the Clerk of Oxenford confess that he learned the story from Petrarch, and even assign the exact place of Petrarch's residence in the concluding part of his life."

However ingenious and plausible this reasoning may be, it is far from conclusive. Though Chaucer undoubtedly knew Latin and French, it is by no means certain, notwithstanding his supposed obligations to the Decameron, that he was as well acquainted with Italian. There may have been a common Latin original of the main incidents of many, if not of all the Tales, for which Chaucer is supposed to have been wholly indebted to Boccaccio; and from which originals Boccaccio himself

may have taken them. That Chaucer was not acquainted with Italian may be inferred from his not having introduced any Italian quotation into his works,[24] redundant as they are with Latin and French words and phrases. His missions to Italy will, no doubt, be mentioned by those indiscriminate worshippers of genius, who endow their idols with all human attainments, as proof of his having spoken Italian; but it should be remembered that Latin was then the universal language of the learned, which was Petrarch's motive for translating the Tale of Griselda from Italian into Latin; and there is an instance of the minister of a French Prince having declined to correspond in his vernacular language because he could neither write nor speak it,[25] while two English envoys to France in 1404, (one of whom was Sir Thomas Swynford, the nephew of Chaucer's wife,) declared to the French ambassadors that they were as ignorant of French as of Hebrew.[26] Unless then it be assumed against probability that Italian, of which there is no

[24] Though Chaucer's writings have not been examined for the purpose, the remark in the text is not made altogether from recollection, for at the end of Speght's edition of Chaucer's works, translations are given of the Latin and French words in the Poems; but not a single *Italian* word is mentioned.

[25] Journal of Bishop Beckington's Mission to the Count of Armagnac in 1442, 8vo. p. 39.

[26] Retrospective Review, New Series, Vol. I. p. 341.

proof that Chaucer knew any thing, was as familiar to him as Latin, which language there is evidence he knew well, a sufficient reason is found for his having taken the Tale from Petrarch's translation, rather than from the Decameron.

It would be profitless to follow Godwin farther through the web he has spun out of his own imagination on this subject, or to cite against himself his own equally baseless vision of Chaucer having first heard of the existence of the Decameron from Petrarch in 1373, in support of the present suggestion that he was not so greatly indebted to that work as has been supposed.

The passage before cited in the Canterbury Tales requires however a few more observations. It is in his own character only, that Chaucer appears in the Pilgrimage, in the General Prologue, the Rime of Sir Thopas, and in the prose tale of Melibeus; and each of the other personages is individually described, and has a distinct existence.

Their knowledge of the world, their wit and learning, and the skill with which their narratives are written, must of course be attributed to the Author; and some of their feelings, thoughts, and passions may have had their prototype in his own bosom. But the creator of an imaginary hero can never be safely identified with his creation; and when from a numerous groupe, a writer singles out himself in his own individual

person, acts in his own corporeal capacity, pourtrays his own physical peculiarities, and clearly and intentionally describes his own conduct, nay, when he even designates himself by name, it seems unreasonable that he should be supposed to relate a circumstance of his own life by any other mouth than his own. If, therefore, Chaucer had stated in the Rime of Sir Thopas, or in the Tale of Melibeus, where he appears in his own person, that he had learnt either of those Tales from any other writer, some faith would unquestionably be due to the statement. But the Clerk of Oxford, and others of the Pilgrims, may have been the portraits of original personages, and the Clerk might have learnt Griselda's history from Petrarch at Padua; or, far more likely, both the Clerk and the immediate source of the Tale were purely fictitious. Godwin's argument that Chaucer could have had no other motive for making those lines proceed from the Clerk's lips than an "eager desire to commemorate his interview with Petrarch," is fairly met, even if it be not destroyed, by the suggestion, that such an object would have been much more effectually attained, had he himself recited the Tale of Griselda, and given to the Clerk, (by whom it would have been both more properly and characteristically related) so moral and grave a story as that of Melibeus. Moreover, the lines on which Godwin's theory rests are scarcely consistent

with a passage towards the conclusion of the Clerk's Tale, where he speaks of Petrarch's having "written and indited" it, in a very different manner from his previous statement that he had "learned it at Padua" from Petrarch:—

> "Every wight in his degree
> Shulde be constant in adversitee,
> As was Griselde, therefore Petrark *writeth*
> *This storie, which with high stile he enditeth.*"

Until however accident brings some hitherto undiscovered document to light, Chaucer's visit to Petrarch and its attendant circumstances must remain among the many doubtful circumstances in the lives of eminent men, which their admirers wish to believe true, but for which their biographers ought to require surer evidence than what Godwin calls "coincidences which furnish a basis of historical probability."[27]

Chaucer's mission to Italy is the earliest evidence that his talents were appreciated by the Crown; and he must have performed the duties with which he was entrusted to the King's satisfaction, as he soon after received several marks of the Royal favour. By a writ, dated at Windsor on the 23rd of April 1374, a pitcher of wine daily was granted to him for life, to be received in the port of London from

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[27] Vol. ii. p. 479.

the hands of the King's butler.[28] Upon this boon various observations have been written. The time and nature of the grant, and the probability of Chaucer, as one of the King's Esquires, being in attendance on his Sovereign on the 23rd of April, when the feast of Saint George was annually celebrated at Windsor, are temptations for exercising the imagination as to the circumstances under which the gift took place;[29] but this allowance was soon afterwards, if not always, commuted for a money payment; and grants of wine seem to have been frequently made with no other object.

On the 8th of June 1374, Chaucer was appointed Comptroller of the Customs and Subsidy of Wools, Skins, and tanned Hides in the Port of London, during the King's pleasure, taking the same fees as other Comptrollers of the Customs and Subsidy. He was, like his predecessors,[30] to write the rolls of his Office with his own hand; he was to be continually present; he was to perform his duties personally and not by De-

[28] Rot. Pat. 48 Edw. III. p. 1, m. 20. Fœdera, N. E. vol. iii. p. 1001. G.

[29] King Henry the Fourth gave John Gower, apparently the Poet, two gallons of wine in 1406. Wardrobe Accounts, Harleian MS. 319, f. 49 b.

[30] Godwin, vol. ii. p. 97, who said he had examined similar grants. These Rolls probably contain the Poet's autograph; and though not now known to exist, they may hereafter be discovered.

puty; and the other part of the seal which is called "the Coket" was to remain in his custody.[31] By a warrant dated on the 13th of the same month, the Duke of Lancaster granted Chaucer 10*l.* for life, to be paid to him at the manor of the Savoy, in consideration of the good service which he and his wife Philippa had rendered to the said Duke, to his Consort, and to his mother the Queen.[32] He received his pension of 6*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.* as one of the King's Valets in that year, and again in 1375.[33] On the 8th of November 1375 he obtained a grant of the custody of the lands and person of Edmond, son and heir of Edmond Staplegate of Kent,[34] who died in 1372;[35] but his ward became of age within three years. In the petition of the said Edmond Staplegate the son, claiming to exercise the office of Butler at the coronation of Richard the Second, by tenure of the manor of Bilsynton in Kent, he says that he had paid Chaucer for his wardship and marriage the sum of 104*l.*[36] On the 28th of December 1375 the King granted Chaucer

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[31] Rot. Pat. 48 Edw. III. p. 1, m. 7. Fœdera, N. E. vol. iii. p. 1004. G.

[32] Receiver's Accounts in the Office of the Duchy of Lancaster.

[33] Issue Rolls 48 and 49 Edw. III.

[34] Rot. Pat. 49 Edw. III. p. 2, m. 8. G.

[35] Esch. 46 Edw. III. n. 58.

[36] Rot. Claus. 1 Ric. II. m. 45. G.

the custody of five "solidates" of rent in Solys in Kent, which were in the King's hands, in consequence of the minority of the heir of John Solys deceased, together with the marriage of the said heir.[37] The value of this gift could not have been great; and the advantage which Chaucer derived from it is uncertain, nothing more being known of his ward than that he was the son of the deceased, that his name was William de Solys, and that he was then an infant of the age of one year.[38] The only record that has been found connected with Chaucer's execution of the Office of Comptroller of the Customs is dated on the 12th of July 1376, when the King granted him 71*l.* 4*s.* 6*d.* being the price of some forfeited wool, because one John Kent of London had conveyed the said wool to Dordrecht without having paid the duty, which sum had been obtained as a fine from that person.[39] In May 1376 he received his own and

[37] Rot. Patent 49 Edw. III. p. 2, m. 4. A "solidate" of land, according to Blount, is as much land as is yearly worth one shilling; but there is great doubt as to its precise value.

[38] Esch. 49 Edw. III. Second Part, No. 40. The name is erroneously printed Scolys in the Index to the printed Calendar. Solys is a manor in Bonnington in the hundred of Wingham; and as the name of Solys was extinct there in the reign of Henry the Fourth, (Hasted's History of Kent, ed. 1790, vol. iii. p. 709) Chaucer's ward probably died young, and without issue. There is no later Inquisition relating to the family.

[39] Rot. Pat. 50 Edw. III. p. 1, m. 5. G.

his wife's pension at the Exchequer; and after Michaelmas an advance of fifty shillings was made to him on account of the current half year's allowance.[40] On the 18th of October 1376, and 12th of June 1377 he received his annuity from the Duke of Lancaster.[41] Soon after, he was twice paid 40*s.* by the Keeper of the King's Wardrobe, for his half yearly Robes, as one of the King's Esquires;[42] and he received 7*l.* 2*s.* 6½*d.* for his daily allowance of a pitcher of wine from the 27th of October 1376 to the 21st of June 1377.[42]

Towards the end of 1376, the King appointed Sir John Burley, and Geoffrey Chaucer, to perform some secret service, the nature of which has not been ascertained. No commission appears to have been issued to them, nor did they receive the usual letters of protection, whence it may perhaps be inferred that they were not sent abroad; and all that is known on the subject is, that on the 23rd of December in that year Sir John Burley was paid 13*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.*; and Chaucer, who is described as being in Burley's "comi-

[40] Issue Roll, Mich. 50 Edw. III.

[41] Receiver's Accounts in the Office of the Duchy of Lancaster, from Michaelmas, 50 Edw. III. to Michaelmas, 1 Ric. II. *Vide* Note F.

[42] Wardrobe Accounts of the 50 and 51 Edw. III. now in the Repository at Carlton Ride.

tiva" or retinue, 6*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.* for their wages on the occasion.[43]

In February 1377 Chaucer was associated with Sir Thomas Percy (afterwards Earl of Worcester) in a secret mission to Flanders; but, as their commission is not upon record, its object has not been discovered. Sir Thomas Percy was advanced 33*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.* and Chaucer 10*l.* on the 17th of that month, for their expenses;[44] and a few days previously, Chaucer received letters of protection, in consequence of this mission, which were to be in force until Michaelmas in that year.[45]

Froissart states that in February 1377 Chaucer was joined with Sir Guichard d'Angle, (afterwards Earl of Huntingdon), and Sir Richard Sturry, to negociate a secret treaty for the marriage of Richard Prince of Wales with Mary, daughter of the King of France. The English envoys, he says, met those of France at Montreuil-sur-Mer, where they remained some time, and then returned to England; and in consequence of their proceedings the truce with France was prolonged to the

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[43] Issue Roll, Mich. 51 Edw. III. *Vide* Note G.

[44] Ibid. *Vide* Note H.

[45] Rot. Franc. 51 Edw. III. m. 7. G. This protection was dated on the 12th of February 1377. Though by the terms of his patent Chaucer was not permitted to be absent from his duties as Comptroller of the Subsidies, the obligation evidently did not extend to any employment in the King's service.

first of the ensuing May.[46] But, as was not uncommon, Froissart has apparently blended two distinct negociations.

On the 20th of February 1377, the Bishop of Hereford, Lord Cobham, Sir John Montague, and Dr. Shepeye were empowered to treat with the French King for peace;[47] but at that time Chaucer had proceeded with Sir Thomas Percy to Flanders. He must, however, have returned to England before April following, because on the 11th of that month he himself received 20*l.* at the Exchequer, which the King had given him as a reward for divers journeys he had made in his service abroad.[48] On the 26th of that month several eminent persons, (one of whom was, as Froissart states, Sir Guichard d'Angle,) were appointed Ambassadors to negotiate a peace with France,[49] but nothing is said in their commission of power to treat for the young Prince of Wales's marriage. Though not named in that commission, Chaucer was either attached to the embassy, or was entrusted with some secret affairs of a similar nature, for on the 20th of the same month letters of protection were issued to him, to continue from that day to the 1st of August

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[46] Froissart par Buchon, vol. vi. pp. 102, 305. G.
[47] Fœdera, N. E. vol. iii. p. 1073.
[48] Issue Roll, Easter 51 Edw. III. *Vide* Note I.
[49] Fœdera, N. E. vol. iii. p. 1076.

ensuing,[50] he being in the King's service abroad; and on the 30th, the sum of 26*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.* was paid for his wages on the occasion.[51] But the payment of his expenses for this mission some years after,[52] shews still more distinctly that the marriage was not then proposed.

Edward the Third died in June in that year; and these documents, which are the last of his reign relating to Chaucer, prove that he was still one of the King's Esquires, and that he enjoyed the Royal confidence and favour.

The accession of Richard the Second proved extremely favourable to Chaucer's interests. On the 16th of January 1378, Sir Guichard d'Angle, (who had been created Earl of Huntingdon,) Sir Hugh Segrave, and Dr. Skirlaw, were constituted Ambassadors to negotiate the King's marriage with a daughter of the French monarch.[53] Chaucer appears to have been attached to the mission, as he was afterwards paid his expenses for going to France, in that year, with the same object;[54] which facts agree, except in the dates, with Frois-

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[50] Rot. Franc. 51 Edw. III. m. 5. G.

[51] Issue Roll, Easter 51 Edw. III. *Vide* Note I.

[52] *Vide* p. 40 postea, and Note R.

[53] Fœdera, vol. vii. p. 184.

[54] Issue Roll, Mich. 4 Ric. II. *Vide* p. 40 postea, and Note R.

sart's statement. The annuity of twenty marks, given him by the late King, was confirmed by letters patent on the 23rd of March 1378;[55] and in lieu of the pitcher of wine daily, twenty marks a-year were granted to him on the 18th of April following.[56] Chaucer appears to have returned to England early in that year; but his talents for diplomacy were not allowed to remain long unemployed. In May 1378 he was sent with Sir Edward Berkeley to Lombardy, to treat with Bernardo Visconti Lord of Milan and the celebrated Sir John Hawkwood[57] "pro certis negociis expeditionem guerræ Regis tangentibus,"[58] a vague phrase, which there is scarcely enough information on the policy of England towards the Italian states to explain. On the 10th of May Chaucer obtained the usual letters of protection until the ensuing Christmas;[59] on the 14th of that month he was paid 20*l.* being the arrears of his pension, and he received 1*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.* in advance

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[55] Recited in the Patent of the 1st of May 1388, by which his pensions were assigned to John Scalby. Rot. Pat. 11 Ric. II. p. 2, m. 1. G.

[56] Ibid. and Original Writ of Privy Seal, dated 18th of April, 1 Ric. II. 1378 (*Vide* Note K); also Issue Roll, Easter 2 Ric. II. (*Vide* Note L.)

[57] A Memoir and Portrait of this remarkable person are given in the sixth volume of the Bibliotheca Topographia Britannica.

[58] Issue Roll, Easter 1 Ric. II. *Vide* Note L.

[59] Rot. Franc. p. 2, 1 Ric. II. m. 6.

for the current half year;[58] on the 21st of May he had letters of general attorney for one year, in consequence of his absence abroad;[60] and on the 28th Sir Edward Berkeley was paid 130*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.* and Chaucer 56*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.* for their wages and expenses.[58]

Of the precise object or result of his mission to Lombardy no particulars are known; but a fact of much literary value is established by one of the documents connected with it; namely, that (as has hitherto been only presumed) Chaucer was certainly the friend of the Poet Gower. In case of any legal proceedings being instituted during his absence, it was necessary that Chaucer should appoint two persons to appear for him in the Courts; and supposing one of the individuals to have been selected merely because he was a lawyer, the other would probably have been an intimate friend, on whose ability, zeal, and honour he could entirely rely. Chaucer named John Gower and Richard Forrester (of whom nothing more has been found) as his representatives;[60] and the identity of the JOHN GOWER mentioned in that document with the Poet is not only highly probable in itself, but is supported by the name being very uncommon at that period, and by both of them being connected with the county of Kent.[61]

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[60] Rot. Franc. p. 2, 1 Ric. II. m. 6. *Vide* Note M.

[61] See the Notices of GOWER, by the present biographer of Chaucer, in the Retrospective Review, N. S. vol. ii.

about sixty-five,[65] so that their friendship certainly endured until within seven years of his death; and the probability is that it was never dissolved.

Chaucer must have returned from Italy before February 1379, as on the 3rd of that month he received the greater part of his original pension "with his own hands."[66] He would, however, appear to have been absent from London, if not from England, between May and December in that year, for on the 24th of May 1379 the first payment of the pension granted to him by Richard the Second, together with his other annuity, were issued to him, by assignment.[67] On the 9th of the following December he was again in London, when he himself received his two pensions;[68] but in July 1380 they were paid him by assignment.[69] In November 1380 he was personally paid his wages and the expenses incurred on his mission to Lombardy, together with his half year's pensions;[70] and in March 1381 he received 22*l.* for his wages and the expenses of his missions to France in 1377, before mentioned.[71] On the 8th of May 1382

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[65] *Vide* p. 11 and 12, antea.

[66] Issue Roll, Mich. 2 Ric. II. *Vide* Note N.

[67] Issue Roll, Easter 2 Ric. II. *Vide* Note O.

[68] Issue Roll, Mich. 3 Ric. II. *Vide* Note P.

[69] Issue Roll, Easter 3 Ric. II. *Vide* Note Q.

[70] Issue Roll, Mich. 4 Ric. II. *Vide* Note R.

[71] *Ibid.*

he was appointed Comptroller of the Petty Customs in the Port of London during pleasure, receiving the accustomed wages, which office he was to execute in person or by his sufficient deputy.[72] He still, however, retained the situation of Comptroller of the Customs and Subsidies to which Edward the Third had appointed him; and on the 25th of November 1384 he was permitted to absent himself for one month from the duties of that office, on account of his own urgent affairs; and the Collectors of the Customs and Subsidies were commanded to swear in his deputy.[73] Another favour was conferred upon him on the 17th of the following February, by his being allowed to nominate a permanent deputy.[74] The Poet was thus partially released from duties, which, if they did not fetter his genius, must have consumed too much of his time to allow of his devoting himself to his favourite pursuits.

The next notice of Chaucer is of considerable importance. He was elected a Knight of the Shire for Kent in the Parliament which met at Westminster on the 1st of October 1386, his colleague being William Betenham, and his mainpernors William Reve and William Holt. Chaucer and Betenham were allowed 24*l.* 9*s.* for

[72] Rot. Pat. 5 Ric. II. p. 2, m. 15. G.
[73] Rot. Claus. 8. Ric. II. m. 30. G.
[74] Rot. Pat. 8 Ric. II. p. 2, m. 31. G.

their expenses in coming to, being at, and returning from the said Parliament, being 8*s.* per diem for sixty-one days.[75] This fact tends to identify the Poet with Kent, in which county it is probable that he possessed some property; for although there was then no law obliging persons who were elected Knights of a particular Shire to be residents therein, they were, in most cases, chosen from the superior gentry of the respective counties.[76] The Parliament to which Chaucer was elected did not sit after the 1st of November 1386, and all its proceedings were directed against the Ministers, who represented the party of which Chaucer's patron, the Duke of Lancaster, was the head. While attending his Parliamentary duties, Chaucer was examined at Westminster, on the 15th of October, as a witness for Richard Lord Scrope, in defence of his right to the Arms "azure a bend or," against the claim of Sir Robert Grosvenor, in which controversy numerous persons of every rank gave their testimony. His deposition is material for the information it contains respecting himself, and interesting from the anecdote he relates:

"Geoffrey Chaucer, Esquire, of the age of forty and upwards, armed for twenty-seven years, produced on behalf of Sir Richard Scrope, sworn and examined. Asked, whether

[75] Rot. Claus. 10 Ric. II. m. 16 d.

[76] *See* remarks on Knights of the Shire, Note S.

the Arms, 'Azure, a bend Or,' belonged, or ought to belong, to the said Sir Richard? said Yes, for he saw him so armed in France before the town of Retters (apparently the village of Retiers, near Rennes, in Brittany), and Sir Henry Scrope armed in the same Arms with a white label, and with a banner; and the said Sir Richard armed in the entire Arms, 'Azure, with a bend Or,' and so he had seen him armed during the whole expedition, until the said Geoffrey was taken. Asked, how he knew that the said Arms appertained to the said Sir Richard? said, that he had heard say from old Knights and Esquires that they had been reputed to be their Arms, as common fame and the public voice proved; and he also said that they had continued their possession of the said Arms; and that all his time he had seen the said Arms in banners, glass, paintings, and vestments, and commonly called the Arms of Scrope. Asked, if he had heard any one say who was the first ancestor of the said Sir Richard who first bore the said Arms? said, No, nor had he ever heard otherwise than that they were come of ancient ancestry, and of old gentry, and used the said Arms. Asked, if he had heard any one say how long a time the ancestors of the said Sir Richard had used the said Arms? said, No, but he had heard say that it passed the memory of man. Asked, whether he had ever heard of any interruption or challenge made by Sir Robert

Grosvenor, or by his ancestors, or by any one in his name, to the said Sir Richard, or to any of his ancestors? said, No; but he said that he was once in Friday Street, in London, and as he was walking in the street, he saw hanging a new sign made of the said Arms, and he asked what Inn that was that had hung out these Arms of Scrope? and one answered him and said, No, Sir, they are not hung out for the Arms of Scrope, nor painted there for those Arms, but they are painted and put there by a Knight of the county of Chester, whom men call Sir Robert Grosvenor; and that was the first time he ever heard speak of Sir Robert Grosvenor, or of his ancestors, or of any other bearing the name of Grosvenor."[77]

It does not appear that Chaucer was ever elected to Parliament except in 1386; and no other facts relating to him have been discovered between 1386 and May 1388, than the half yearly payments of his pensions.

Towards the end of 1386, Chaucer must have been superseded in both his offices; for on the 4th of December in that year, Adam Yerdeley was appointed Comptroller of the Customs and Subsidies;[78] and on the

[77] De Controversia in Curia Militari inter Ricardum de Scrope et Robertum Grosvenor, Milites, Rege Ricardo Secundo, MCCCLXXXV—MCCCXC—E Recordis in Turre Londinensi Asservatis. 2 vols. 8vo. 1831, vol. i. p. 178. His deposition is also printed in the Appendix to Godwin's Life of Chaucer.

[78] Rot. Patent 10 Ric. II. pt. 1, m. 9. G.

14th of the same month, Henry Gisors was made Comptroller of the Petty Customs in the port of London.[79]

His biographers attribute Chaucer's dismissal to his having taken an active part in the dispute between the Court and the Citizens of London respecting the election of John of Northampton to the Mayoralty in 1382; and they cite various passages in the "Testament of Love," which they suppose shew that, in February 1384, when Northampton was ordered to be arrested and sent to Corfe Castle,[80] a process issued against the Poet, who fled for safety to the island of Zealand; that he remained in exile for two years; that he met many of his confederates in Zealand, who had fled from the same cause, to whom he acted with great liberality; that the persons who had the management of his affairs in England betrayed their trust; that he experienced much distress during his banishment; that he returned to England sometime in 1386, and on his arrival was sent to the Tower; that he remained in custody for three years, and was released about May 1389, at the intercession of Anne of Bohemia, Queen of Richard the Second; and that it was one condition of his pardon that he should impeach his former associates, to which terms

[79] Rot. Patent 10 Ric. II. pt. 1, m. 4. G.
[80] Rot. Claus. 7 Ric. II. m. 9. G.

he ultimately yielded. These circumstances, which, if true, would form the most important facts in Chaucer's life, stand only [81] on the authority of passages in the "Testament of Love," an allegorical composition, of which it is equally difficult to comprehend the meaning or the purport.

All these ingenious inferences and suppositions are, however, undoubtedly erroneous. Chaucer must have been in London from 1380 to May 1388, as he regularly received his pension, half yearly, at the Exchequer, with his own hands during that period;[82] and, so far from there being any record to justify such a construction of the "Testament of Love," it is certain that he held both his offices in the

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[81] Mr. Todd, in his Illustrations of Gower and Chaucer, p. 309, assigns to Chaucer a Poem, at the commencement of a copy of the Canterbury Tales in the possession of the late Duke of Sutherland, in praise of Robert Vere, Earl of Oxford, which the author says was written "in a pryson colde," in the margin of which manuscript, after the word "Amen," is "per Rotheley;" but this, Mr. Todd suggests, was the name of the transcriber, and not of the author; and he adduces in support of that opinion the circumstance of one of Chaucer's pieces being attributed to his copiest Adam Scrivener, the transcriber of Boetius and of Troilus and Cresside, whose "negligence and rape" caused him "to rubbe and scrape so ofte a daye." It is however nearly certain that the Poem mentioned by Mr. Todd was written by a person called Rothley, and not by Chaucer.

[82] Issue Rolls from Easter 3 Ric. II. to Easter 11 Ric. II.

Customs from May 1382 until about December 1386; that in November 1384 he was permitted to be absent from his duties on his own private affairs, for one month; that in February 1385 he obtained the farther indulgence of being allowed to exercise his Office of Comptroller of the Subsidies by deputy; and that at the very moment when he is supposed to have been a prisoner in the Tower, he was sitting in Parliament as a Knight of the Shire for one of the largest counties in England.

Though the cause of Chaucer's dismissal from his employments in December 1386 has not been discovered, and though nothing more is known of him in 1387 and 1388 than that he received his pensions in those years,[83] it is extremely likely that he became obnoxious to Thomas Duke of Gloucester and the other Ministers, who had succeeded his patron the Duke of Lancaster in the Government. In November 1386, a Commission issued for inquiring, among other alleged abuses, into the state of the Subsidies and Customs;[84] and as the Commissioners began their duties by examining the accounts of the Officers employed in the collection of

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[83] Issue Rolls, Easter 10 Ric. II. and Mich. and Easter 11 Ric. II.

[84] Rot. Parl. vol. iii. p. 375. Proceedings of the Privy Council, vol. i. p. 1.

the revenue,[85] the removal of any of those persons soon afterwards, may, with much probability, be attributed to that investigation.

On the 1st of May 1388, the grants of his two pensions of twenty marks each before noticed were, at his request, cancelled; and the said annuities were assigned to John Scalby.[86] This proceeding has been considered as a proof that Chaucer, being much distressed, had sold his pensions to Scalby; and although such an inference is probable, its correctness is by no means certain.

A great change in public affairs occurred in May 1389, by the young King assuming the reins of Government and appointing new Ministers, among whom were the Duke of York, and the Earl of Derby, eldest son of the Poet's patron, John of Gaunt. The Duke of Lancaster, who was then in Guienne, was immediately recalled, and he returned to England about December in that year;[87] but before he arrived, Chaucer had found friends in the

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[85] Lingard's History of England, vol. iv. p. 286. See farther remarks on this subject in Note T.

[86] Rot. Pat. 11 Ric. II. p. 2, m. 1. ⅁. It does not appear who this individual was. A John de Scalby, of Scarborough, in Yorkshire, was one of the persons of that town who were excepted from the King's pardon for insurrection in October 6 Ric. II. 1382. Rot. Parl. vol. iii. p. 136.

[87] Proclamations dated on the 6th and 8th of May 1389, printed in the Rolls of Parliament, vol. iv. p. 404. Walsyngham, 337. Knyghton, 2735. Lingard, iv. 303-4. Proceedings of the Privy Council, vol. i. pp. 11, 17.

new Administration to advance his interests. On the 12th of July 1389, he was appointed to the valuable office of Clerk of the King's Works at the Palace of Westminster, Tower of London, Castle of Berkhemstead, the King's Manors of Kennington, Eltham, Clarendon, Sheen, Byfleet, Childern Langley, and Feckenham; also at the Royal Lodge of Hatherbergh in the New Forest, at the Lodges in the Parks of Clarendon, Childern Langley, and Feckenham, and at the Mews for the King's falcons at Charing Cross. His duties, which he was permitted to execute by deputy, are fully described in the patent:[88] his salary was two shillings per diem, and there were probably other sources of profit.

It is doubtful if this appointment arose from Chaucer's peculiar fitness for the situation, though passages of his writings might be adduced to shew that he possessed some knowledge of architecture. Payments were made to him as Clerk of the Works as early as the 22nd of July 1389;[89] and in July 1390 he was commanded to procure workmen and materials for the repair of St. George's Chapel at Windsor.[90] On the 22nd of January 1391 his appointment of John Elmhurst as his deputy, for repairs to be made at the Palace

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[88] Rot. Pat. 13 Ric. II. p. 1, m. 30. G.

[89] Issue Roll, Easter 12 Ric. II.

[90] Rot. Pat. 14 Ric. II. m. 33. G. and Issue Roll Easter 13 Ric. II.

of Westminster, and Tower of London, was confirmed by the Crown ;[91] but Chaucer must have been superseded in the same year, because on the 16th of September following, a John Gedney held that Office, so that Chaucer did not fill the situation more than two years.[92]

The cause of his removal, and his position and employment during the ensuing three years, must be left to conjecture, a resource which his biographers have freely adopted in filling up this,[93] and the other chasms in the Poet's history. All that is known of him is that he received payments as " late Clerk of the Works" on the 16th of December 1391, 4th of March and 13th of July 1392, and again in 1393 ;[94] and it is nearly certain that he had no other pension than the 10*l.* per annum

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[91] Rot. Patent 14 Ric. II. p. 2, m. 34. " Sciatis quod Nos assignavimus Johannem Elmhurst, quem dilectus serviens noster Galfridus Chaucer clericus operationum nostrarum sub se deputavit, provisorem earundem operationum ad Palacium nostrum Westm' et Turrim nostram London' emendanda," &c. At the end are these words, " Per billam ipsius Galfridi."

[92] Rot. Patent 15 Ric. II. p. 1, m. 24. Godwin's Life of Chaucer, vol. iv. 67.

[93] Godwin makes Chaucer to have retired to Woodstock, " which probably he had scarcely seen for seventeen years :" he gives his sentiments at this period, and says he wrote the Canterbury Tales and quarrelled with Gower : vol. iv. pp. 58 et seq.

[94] Issue Rolls, Mich. and Easter 15 Ric. II. and Easter 16 Ric. II. He is not mentioned on the Issue Rolls of the 17 Ric. II.

granted to him by the Duke of Lancaster in 1374, and his wages as the King's Esquire, (if indeed any other pecuniary advantage was attached to that situation than an allowance of 40*s.* half yearly for robes,) and that he did not hold any office during that period.

On the 28th of February 1394 Chaucer obtained a grant from the King of 20*l.* for life, payable half yearly at Easter and Michaelmas,[95] being 6*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.* less than the pensions he surrendered in 1388. He received his new pension for the first time on the 10th of December 1394;[96] and that he was then poor may be inferred from several advances having been soon after made to him at the Exchequer on account of his annuity, before the half yearly payments became due. Thus, on the 1st of April 1395 he obtained 10*l.* as a loan on the current half year's pension, which was repaid on the 28th of May following;[96] on the 25th of June he borrowed 10*l.*;[97] on the 9th of September 1*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.*[97]; on the 27th of November, 8*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.*;[98] and on the 1st of March 1396, 1*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.* were paid to him, being the balance of the half year's pension, of which a large part had been advanced in the preceding November.[98] All these sums were paid into his own hands.

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[95] Rot. Pat. 17 Ric. II. p. 2, m. 35. G.
[96] Issue Roll, Mich. 18 Ric. II. *Vide* Note U.
[97] Issue Roll, Easter 18 Ric. II. *Vide* Note V.
[98] Issue Roll, Mich 19 Ric. II. *Vide* Note W.

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[92] Rot. Patent 15 Ric. II. p. 1, m. 24. Godwin's Life of Chaucer, vol. iv. 67.

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On the 28th of February 1394 Chaucer obtained a grant from the King of 20*l.* for life, payable half yearly at Easter and Michaelmas,[95] being 6*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.* less than the pensions he surrendered in 1388. He received his new pension for the first time on the 10th of December 1394;[96] and that he was then poor may be inferred from several advances having been soon after made to him at the Exchequer on account of his annuity, before the half yearly payments became due. Thus, on the 1st of April 1395 he obtained 10*l.* as a loan on the current half year's pension, which was repaid on the 28th of May following;[96] on the 25th of June he borrowed 10*l.*;[97] on the 9th of September 1*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.*[97]; on the 27th of November, 8*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.*;[98] and on the 1st of March 1396, 1*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.* were paid to him, being the balance of the half year's pension, of which a large part had been advanced in the preceding November.[98] All these sums were paid into his own hands.

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[95] Rot. Pat. 17 Ric. II. p. 2, m. 35. G.
[96] Issue Roll, Mich. 18 Ric. II. *Vide* Note U.
[97] Issue Roll, Easter 18 Ric. II. *Vide* Note V.
[98] Issue Roll, Mich 19 Ric. II. *Vide* Note W.

In 1395 or 1396, Chaucer was one of the attornies of Gregory Ballard, to receive seisin of the manor of Spitelcombe, and other lands in Kent, which tends still farther to identify him with that county.[99]

As the Issue Rolls of the Exchequer from Easter 1396 to Michaelmas 1397 have not been found, no information can be derived from them respecting Chaucer in those years: but the loss of those records seems to be fully supplied by the entry on the next existing Roll. On the 26th of October 1397, John Walden received 10*l.* for Chaucer, being the balance of 30*l.* due to him for his pensions for the three preceding half years; of which 30*l.*, he had received 10*l.* on the 25th of December 1396, 5*l.* on the 2nd of July 1397, and 5*l.* on the 9th of August in the same year.[1]

From the next record of the Poet different conclusions have been drawn, as, on the one hand, it has been considered evidence that he still enjoyed the favour of the Crown, and was employed on important public affairs; while on the other, it has been supposed to prove that he was then in great distress, harassed by his creditors, and obliged to beseech the King to protect him from the law. On the 4th of May 1398, letters of protection were issued to him, stating that whereas the King

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[99] Rot. Claus. 19 Ric. II. m. 8 d.

[1] Issue Roll, Mich. 21 Ric. II. *Vide* Note X.

had appointed his beloved Esquire Geoffrey Chaucer, to perform various arduous and urgent duties in divers parts of the realm of England, and the said Geoffrey, fearing that he might be impeded in the execution thereof by his enemies,[2] by means of various suits, had prayed the King to assist him therein, and that therefore the King took the said Geoffrey, his tenants and property, into his special protection, forbidding any one to sue or arrest him on any plea except it were connected with land, for the term of two years.[3] Though in judging of this document, it must be borne in mind that similar language was often employed in other records of that nature, in cases where the party was not in pecuniary difficulties, yet the Records of the Exchequer for 1398 so strongly support the opinion that Chaucer was in distressed circumstances as to leave little doubt of the fact. It is evident that he could not wait for the payment of his pension at the usual half yearly periods, but that, as in the years 1395 and 1396, he frequently applied for money in advance. He was then old; and as part of those sums were brought to him, instead of receiving them himself, it may be inferred that he was ill or infirm, for it does not appear that he was absent from London. On the 3rd of June 1398 he received his half yearly pension of

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[2] "æmulos."

[3] Rot. Pat. 21 Ric. II. p. 3, m. 26. G.

10*l.* by the hands of William Waxcombe:[4] on the 24th of July he himself[4] obtained a loan of 6*s.* 8*d.*; and a week after, namely, on the 31st, he again borrowed the same trifling sum.[4] No farther application was made until the 23rd of August, when he received 5*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.* with his own hands;[4] and on the 28th of October he was personally paid 10*l.* on account.[5]

These details seem conclusive proof that Chaucer experienced the miseries of poverty in the latter years of his life; and it is melancholy to contemplate the venerable Poet, after such varied public services, and with those literary claims to national gratitude which posterity has so fully recognized, tottering, at the age of seventy-one, to the Exchequer for miserable pittances in advance of his pension. Happily, however, the close of his career was brightened by the bounty of his Sovereign; and his was not one of the many disgraceful instances in which Genius has been suffered to expire in penury and distress.

On the 15th of October 1398 Chaucer obtained another grant of wine; but instead of a pitcher daily, he was to receive, from the 1st of the preceding December, one ton every year during his life, in the port of London,

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[4] Issue Roll, Easter 21 Ric. II. *Vide* Note Y.

[5] Issue Roll, Mich. 22 Ric. II. *Vide* Note Z.

from the King's Chief Butler or his Deputy,[6] which was probably equivalent to a pecuniary grant of about 5*l.* per annum.

A considerable improvement took place in Chaucer's fortunes on the accession of Henry the Fourth, his conduct on which event has been the subject of some injudicious remarks.[7] The Poet had for the greater part of his life been patronized by the House of Lancaster, and was nearly connected by marriage with its late Chief. He must therefore have been personally known to the new Sovereign, to whose favour he had strong pretensions. The King accordingly doubled Chaucer's pension within four days after he came to the throne, by granting him, on the 3rd of October 1399, forty marks yearly, in addition to the annuity of 20*l.* which King Richard had given him[8]; but he was destined not long to enjoy the gift.

Having made oath in Chancery that the Letters Patent of the 28th of February 1394, and 13th of October 1398, before alluded to, had been accidentally lost, he procured, on the 13th of October 1399, exemplifications of those records.[9] It would seem that

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[6] Rot. Pat. 22 Ric. II. p. 1, m. 8. G.
[7] Godwin, vol. iv. p. 139. See Note p. 81 infra.
[8] Rot. Pat. 1 Hen. IV. p. 5, m. 12. G.
[9] Rot. Pat. 1 Hen. IV. p. 1, m. 18. G.

Chaucer closed his days near Westminster Abbey, for on Christmas Eve 1399 he obtained a lease,[10] dated at Westminster, by which Robert Hermodesworth, a Monk and Keeper of the Chapel of the Blessed Mary of Westminster, with the consent of the Abbot and Convent of that place, demised to him a tenement situated in the garden of the said Chapel, for fifty-three years, at the annual rent of 2*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.* If any part of the rent was in arrear for the space of fifteen days, power was given to the lessor to distrain, and if Chaucer died within that term, the premises were to revert to the Custos of the said Chapel for the time being, so that in fact the Poet had only a life-interest therein.[11]

The last notices of Chaucer are, that on Saturday the 21st of February 1400, he received the pension of 20*l.* granted by the late King, and which Henry the Fourth had confirmed;[12] and that on Saturday the 5th of June following, 5*l.*, being part of 8*l.* 13*s.* 5*d.* due on the 1st of March, of the pension granted by Henry the Fourth, was received for him by Henry Somere,[13] who was then

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[10] An engraving of that Lease was published by the Society of Antiquaries.

[11] Printed in Godwin's Life of Chaucer, vol. iv. p. 365, from the original in the possession of the Dean and Chapter of Westminster.

[12] Issue Roll, Mich. 1 Hen. IV. *Vide* Note AA.

[13] Issue Roll, Easter 1 Hen. IV. *Vide* Note BB.

Clerk of the Receipt of the Exchequer, afterwards Under Treasurer, and in 1408 a Baron, and subsequently Chancellor of that Court, to whom Occleve addressed two Ballads, and who was probably a relation of the "Frere John Somere" whose Kalendar is mentioned in Chaucer's Treatise on the Astrolabe.

Chaucer is said to have died on the 25th of October 1400, at the age of seventy-two, and was buried in Westminster Abbey. The precise date of his decease stands on no better authority than the inscription on the tomb erected near his grave, by Nicholas Brigham, a Poet and man of literary attainments, in the year 1556, who, from veneration for Chaucer, caused his child Rachel to be buried near the spot in June 1557.[11] It appears, that a tomb had been before placed over his remains; and the above date of his decease may have been copied from it. There can, however, be little doubt of the correctness of the period assigned to Chaucer's decease; for had he lived many weeks after the end of September 1400, the payment of his pensions would have appeared on the Issue Roll of the Exchequer commencing at Michaelmas in that year and ending at Easter 1401: or at all events on some subsequent Roll.

The tomb which Brigham erected to Chaucer still remains, and forms one of the most

[11] Weever's Ancient Funeral Monuments, p. 260.

interesting objects in Poet's Corner. It is of grey marble, and occupies the north end of a square recess in the wall, having a canopy of four obtuse arches, ornamented with crochets, pinnacles, and drops, in the pointed style. In front are three panelled divisions of starred quarterfoils, containing shields with the Arms of Chaucer, viz. Per pale argent and gules, a bend counterchanged; and the same Arms also occur in an oblong compartment at the back of the recess, where the following inscription was placed, but which is now almost obliterated, from the partial decomposition and crumbling state of the marble. A small whole length portrait of Chaucer was delineated *in plano* on the north side of the inscription, but not a vestige of it is left; and the whole of the recess and canopy has recently been coloured black.[15]

"M. S.

QUI FUIT ANGLORUM VATES TER MAXIMUS OLIM,
GALFRIDUS CHAUCER CONDITUR HOC TUMULO:
ANNUM SI QUÆRAS DOMINI, SI TEMPORA VITÆ
ECCE NOTÆ SUBSUNT, QUÆ TIBI CUNCTA NOTANT.
25 OCTOBRIS 1400.
ÆRUMNARUM REQUIES MORS.
N. BRIGHAM HOS FECIT MUSARUM NOMINE SUMPTUS
1556."

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[15] Neale and Brayley's History and Antiquities of the Abbey Church of St. Peter Westminster, vol. ii. p. 265. An engraving of this Tomb is given in Urry's edition of Chaucer's Works, fol. 1721, in Todd's Illustrations of Gower and Chaucer, and in other Works.

On the ledge of the tomb the following verses were engraved:

"Si rogites quis eram, forsan te fama docebit
Quod si fama negat, mundi quia gloria transit
Hæc monumenta lege—"

Speght says, that the following lines occurred on the original tomb:

"Galfridus Chaucer vates, et fama poesis
Maternæ, hac sacra sum tumulatus humo;"

but they were part of an Epitaph written by Stephanus Surigonius, a Poet Laureat of Milan, and which, according to Caxton, "were wreton on a table hongyng on a pylere by his sepulture."[16]

The popular, but perhaps erroneous opinion, that the latter years of Chaucer's life were spent at Woodstock, or at Donington, has made it necessary, in the opinion of one of his biographers,[17] to account for his being buried in Westminster Abbey; and it is accordingly said that he died while attending his private affairs in London. It is however unquestionable that Chaucer was in London in 1395, probably also in 1396 and 1397, and certainly in 1398, 1399, and 1400;

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[16] Caxton's Edition of Chaucer's translation of "Boethius de Consolatione Philosophiæ," at the end of which is a copy of the said Verses. They are reprinted both in Speght's and in Urry's edition of Chaucer's Works.

[17] Bale.

and it is extremely likely that, at the time of his death, he was residing in the tenement near to the Abbey, of which a lease was granted to him in December 1399, and that he was therefore buried in that edifice.

Although it has not been ascertained positively whom Chaucer married, the statement that his wife was PHILIPPA, daughter and coheiress of SIR PAYNE ROET,[18] of Hainault, Guienne King of Arms, and sister of Katherine, widow of Sir Hugh Swynford, (who was the mistress, and afterwards the wife, of John of Gaunt Duke of Lancaster) scarcely admits of a doubt. The authorities for the statement are, 1st. a Pedigree, compiled in the reign of Queen Elizabeth by Robert Glover, Somerset Herald, a writer of the highest professional reputation;[19] 2nd. the adoption of "Gules, three Catherine wheels Or," the Arms of Roet, by Thomas Chaucer, which occur repeatedly on his tomb, as his paternal Coat, instead of the Arms usually attributed to him and to the Poet, viz. "Per pale Argent and Gules, a bend counterchanged," and which, at one period, Thomas Chaucer undoubtedly used.[20] 3rd. That John of Gaunt was the patron of the Poet,

[18] For remarks on the family of ROET *see* Note CC.

[19] This Pedigree was printed by Speght and Urry; but as the Compiler professed himself ignorant of her baptismal name, it would not appear to have been founded upon documentary evidence.

[20] A drawing of THOMAS CHAUCER'S Seal, of which

of his wife, and of his supposed son, Thomas Chaucer, if not also of his daughter. 4th. That the Arms of many descendants of that Prince, by Katherine Swynford, were placed on Thomas Chaucer's tomb.

To these strong presumptive proofs that Geoffrey Chaucer married Philippa Roet, have been opposed, the facts that in January 1370, Edward the Third granted pensions to several of the "Domicellæ" of Philippa his late Queen, (who died on the 15th of August 1369), and that one of them was *Philippa Picard*, who obtained one hundred shillings per annum,[21] whence Chaucer's biographers[22]

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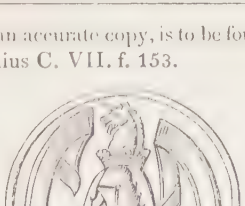
the annexed is an accurate copy, is to be found in the Cottonian MS. Julius C. VII. f. 153.



Though he relinquished the *Arms* of Chaucer for those of Roet, he appears to have retained the Chaucer *Crest*; and the feet of his effigy on his monument in Ewelme Church rest on a Unicorn couchant. The cause of the introduction of a Bird on the Seal is not known.

[21] Rot. Pat. 43 Edw. III. p. 2, m. 1. G.

[22] Tyrwhitt and Godwin. The latter (vol. ii. p. 374) says that "Philippa Pycard was unquestionably the wife of Chaucer."

have, not unreasonably, identified her as the Poet's wife, because King Richard the Second confirmed to *Philippa* Chaucer, late "una Domicellarum" of Philippa Queen of England, his predecessor's grant of ten marks a year, which annuity was paid to "Geoffrey Chaucer her husband" on the 24th of May 1381.[23] But an examination of other records has clearly proved that the inference is unfounded. The pension to Philippa Chaucer, of ten marks annually for life, was granted on the 12th of September 1366, nearly three years before the Queen's decease, by the description of "Philippa Chaucer una Domicellarum Cameræ Philippæ Reginæ Angliæ,"[24] and she was paid it as early as the 19th of February 1368.[25] The Poet must therefore have married before September 1366; and his wife could not possibly have been the Philippa *Pycard* to whom the annuity of 5*l.* was given in January 1370.

Philippa Chaucer remained in the Queen's service until her death, for among the persons of the Royal Household to whom Robes were ordered to be given at Christmas 1368, were *Philippa Chaucer*,[26] and twelve other

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[23] Issue Roll, Easter 4 Ric. II. G.

[24] Rot. Pat. 40 Edw. III. p. 2, m. 30.

[25] Issue Roll, Mich. 42 Edw. III. *Vide* Note DD.

[26] Thynne says he had found "a record of the Pellis Exitus in the time of Edward the Third, of a yearly stipend to *Elizabethe Chaucere*, domicelle Regine Phi-

"Damoiselles,"[26] eight "sous Damoiselles," and several "Veilleresses," of the Queen's Chamber, one of which Veilleresses was *Philippa Pycard*.[27] It cannot be doubted that the Philippa Pycard, the Veilleresse of 1369, was identical with Philippa Pycard the Domicella of January 1370, and (independently of the conclusive evidence before mentioned) could not have been the wife of Chaucer, because Philippa Chaucer is shown to have been one of the Queen's principal demoiselles in 1366, 1368, and 1369, when an inferior situation in the Royal establishment was held by Philippa Pycard, who received part of her annuity, by that name, in April 1370.[28]

If, as there is reason to believe, the father of Chaucer's wife was a native of Hainault, and came to England in the retinue of Queen Philippa in 1328, it is not unlikely that Philippa Chaucer's baptismal name was given to her from being the Queen's god-daughter. It is probable that she entered the Royal Household at an early period

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lippa," whom he conjectures to have been the Poet's sister or kinswoman, and to have afterwards taken the veil at St. Helen's, London, "according," as Speght had "touched one of that profession in primo of King Richard the Second." Vide p. 69 postea.

[27] For remarks on the words "Domicellus" and "Domicella," and the names of the Demoiselles of Queen Philippa, *see* Note EE.

[28] Issue Roll, 44 Edw. III.

of life; and unless she married some time before her pension was assigned to her, the Poet could not have been less than thirty-five when she became his wife. After the Queen's death in 1369 she appears to have become attached to the person of Constance of Castile, Duchess of Lancaster, second consort of John of Gaunt, to whose children, by his first alliance, Katherine Lady Swynford (the supposed younger sister of Philippa Chaucer) was then governess.[29] Before August 1372, the Duke had given Philippa Chaucer a pension of 10*l.* per annum, which grant seems to have been commuted in June 1374 for an annuity of the same amount to her and her husband, for life, in consideration of the good services which they had rendered to the Duke, to his Duchess, and to the late Queen his mother.[30] She received her pension out of the Duke of Lancaster's revenues in November 1379;[30] and in 1380, 1381, and 1382 that Prince presented her with a silver gilt cup and cover, as a new year's gift, the records of which donations shew that she was then one of the three ladies in attendance on the Duchess, the two others being Lady Sanche Blount and Lady Blanch de Trumpington.[30]

As has been already stated, instead of the

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[29] Excerpta Historica, p. 152, et seq.

[30] Registrum Johannis Ducis Lancastriæ, in the Office of the Duchy of Lancaster. *Vide* Note DD.

Arms attributed to the Poet, and which Thomas Chaucer himself once used, that person bore at his decease the Coat of Roet, namely, three wheels, evidently in allusion to the name. It was not unusual for a person to adopt the Arms of his mother, if an heiress, instead of his own paternal coat;[31] hence the change made by Thomas Chaucer in his Armorial bearings could scarcely have arisen from any other cause than his having been the son of a lady whose maiden name was Roet. If, therefore, he were proved to have been the son of Geoffrey Chaucer, the statement that the Poet married the sister of Katherine Duchess of Lancaster, would be placed almost beyond dispute, strengthened as it would be by the facts that his wife and the said Thomas Chaucer, his supposed son, were both patronized by the Duke of Lancaster,

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[31] Thynne, in his "Animadversions" on Chaucer's Works, written in the reign of Henry the Eighth, speaking of Gower's Arms, says, "A difference of Arms seems a difference of Families, unless you can prove that being of one House they altered their Arms upon some just occasion, as that some of the House marrying one heir did leave his own Arms and bare the Arms of his mother, as was accustomed in times past." According to Glover's pedigree, the mother of Thomas Chaucer was the *eldest* daughter and coheiress of Sir Payne Roet. An instance of a similar change of Arms occurred in the case of Alice Duchess of Suffolk, only child of Thomas Chaucer, who adopted her mother's Arms of Burghersh instead of those of Roet or Chaucer.

and that the Arms of that Prince, impaled with those of Roet, the Arms of Beaufort, and the Arms of other persons descended from the Duke's connection with Katherine Swynford, were placed on his tomb.[32] On the other hand, if the Poet married Philippa Roet, sister of the Duchess of Lancaster, the above facts leave no doubt that Thomas Chaucer was his son, so that the same evidence tends to establish both propositions. It is rather singular, however, if the Poet were so closely connected with a personage of such exalted rank and immense power as John of Gaunt, that he should not have attained a higher station in society; and it is still more remarkable, that the name of Chaucer does not occur among the numerous individuals whom the Duke mentions in his Will; nor is it to be found in the printed Wills of any one member of the house of Beaufort, to all of whom a descent from the sister of Katherine Duchess of Lancaster would have rendered Thomas Chaucer the first or second cousin. Moreover, Thomas Chaucer would, like Sir Thomas Swynford, have been entitled to his mother's inheritance in Hainault, if she had been one of the coheiresses of Sir Payne Roet;[33] but nothing has been discovered to shew that he asserted a right to any lands in that province.

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[32] *Vide* Note F F.
[33] *Vide* Note C C.

Philippa Chaucer's pension was confirmed by Richard the Second; and she apparently received it (except between 1370 and 1373, in 1378 and 1385, the reason of which omissions does not appear) from 1366 until the 18th of June 1387.[34] The money was usually paid to her through her husband; but in November 1374 by the hands of John de Hermesthorpe,[35] and in June 1377, (the Poet being then on his mission in France), by Sir Roger de Trumpington,[36] whose wife, Lady Blanch de Trumpington, was like herself, in the service of the Duchess of Lancaster. Though living in June 1387, she probably died before the end of the year, for after that time nothing is known of her; and her annuities are not recorded to have been paid subsequent to 1387. This would agree with Godwin's hypothesis,[37] that the Poet became a widower some time before his death, because in the verses addressed to "My Master Buxton," he says,

> "And therefore, though I hight for to express
> The sorowe and woe that is in mariage;
> I dare not write of it no wickedness
> Lest I myself fall eft in soche dotage."

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[34] Issue Rolls passim, and the Roll for Easter 10 Ric. II.

[35] Issue Roll, Mich. 44 Edw. III. A facsimile of this entry and of the payment to her husband in that year, is given in the translation of that Roll by Frederick Devon, Esq. printed in 8vo. 1835.

[36] Issue Roll, Easter 51 Edw. III.

[37] Vol. iv. pp. 162-3.

He is presumed, besides Thomas Chaucer, to have had a son named Lewis; for in his "Treatise on the Astrolabe," Chaucer thus addresses him: "Little Lowis, my sonne,[38] I perceive well by certaine evidences thine abilitie to learne sciences, touching numbers and proportions, and also wel consider I thy busie prayer in especiall to learne the Treatise of the Astrolabie. Then for as much as a Philosopher saith, hee wrapeth him in his friend, that condiscendeth to the rightfull prayers of his friend, therefore I have given thee a sufficient Astrolabie for our orizont, compouned after the latitude of Oxenford." Chaucer mentions him as a child, and says he was induced to compile that treatise, because the carts of the Astrolabe which he had seen were "too hard to thy tender age of ten yeare to conceive;" and that he wrote in English, "for Latine ne canst thou nat yet but smale, my little sonne."

From his speaking of "our horizon compounded after the latitude of Oxenford," it has been conjectured that he was then living near that city, where with greater probability, it is also supposed his son was at school; while from his twice fixing on the 12th of March 1391 as the day on which some cal-

[38] Lydgate also says,

"And to his sonne that called was Lowis
He made a Tretise, ful noble and of great prise,
Upon th' Astrolabour."

culations were made, it has been concluded that the piece was drawn up at that time, an inference not warranted by the premises. As the name of Lewis Chaucer has not been met with in any other place, he probably died young. It is extremely likely that Chaucer had a daughter, and also a sister, or some other relation named Elizabeth; for on the 27th of July 1377, the King exercised his right to nominate a Nun in the Priory of St. Helen's London, after the coronation, in favour of Elizabeth Chausier;[39] and on the 12th of May 1381, about sixteen years after the time when the Poet is presumed to have married, the Duke of Lancaster paid 51*l.* 8*s.* 2*d.* being the expenses of making "Elizabeth Chaucy" a noviciate in the Abbey of Berking in Essex, which Elizabeth must have been a different person from the Nun of St. Helen's.[40]

In this Memoir, such facts only have been stated as are established by evidence, even at the risk of its author being classed by some future Godwin among "the writers of cold tempers and sterile imaginations, who by

[39] Original Privy Seal 1 Ric. II. in the Tower. *Vid.* Note 26, p. 62 ante.

[40] Registrum Johannis Ducis Lancastriæ. It is proper to observe, that every fact that has been discovered of a Geoffrey and Philippa Chaucer, Chaucers, or Chaucy, has been attributed to the Poet and his wife, though it is not impossible, however improbable, that there were contemporaries of the same names.

their phlegmatic and desultory industry have brought discredit upon the science of antiquities," and of incurring the reproach which he has made against Mr. Tyrwhitt, of being "fascinated with the charms of a barren page, and a meagre collection of dates."[41] Those who are satisfied with probabilities, founded upon fanciful allusions to Chaucer himself or his contemporaries, in the Poet's writings, or who are pleased with ingenious speculations as to the time when, and the feelings under which his pieces were written, and what he may have said, or heard, or thought on different occasions, will have their taste amply gratified by a perusal of the most elaborate Life of Chaucer that has yet appeared,[42] which work will also shew them upon what slight and unstable foundations theories may be built. It is, however, by no means pretended that all the hypotheses which rest on passages in the Poet's works are fallacious, but it is dangerous to attach much weight to them; and the caution of a profound investigator of his productions should be constantly borne in mind:—"A few historical particulars relating to himself, which may be collected from his writings, have been taken notice of already, and perhaps a more attentive examination of his works might

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[41] Godwin's Life of Chaucer, vol. ii. p. 478.

[42] Ibid.

furnish a few more. We must be cautious, however, in such an examination, of supposing allusions which Chaucer never intended, or of arguing from pieces which he never wrote as if they were his."[43]

Chaucer's works have been carefully perused, with the object of finding facts in them for this Memoir; but, with the following few exceptions, little reliance can be placed upon any of his remarks. The "Testament of Love" has been already alluded to; and there is not space in this Memoir to comment on all the passages that seem to illustrate his feelings, opinions, character, and attainments. His writings must be closely studied to form a proper estimate of the magnitude of his genius, the extent and variety of his information, his wonderful knowledge of human nature, the boldness with which he attacked clerical abuses, and advocated the interests of honour and virtue, and more than all, of that philosophical construction of mind, which rendered him superior to the prejudices of his time, and placed him far in advance of the wisest of his contemporaries.

From internal evidence it appears that the "Canterbury Pilgrimage" was written after the year 1386. Among the pilgrims, Chaucer has introduced himself; and the following

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[43] Tyrwhitt's edition of the "Canterbury Tales."

lines probably present a faithful picture of the Poet's appearance:—

——— "Our hoste to japen he began,
And than at erst he looked upon me,
And saide thus, 'What man art thou?' quod he,
'Thou lokest as thou woldest find an hare,
For ever upon the ground I see thee stare.
Approach nere, and look up merily.
Now ware you, Sires, and let this man have place:
He in the waste is shapen as wel as I,
This were a popet in an arme to embrace
For any woman, smal and faire of face.
He seemeth elvish by his contenance,
For unto no wight doth he daliance.'" [44]

He then proceeds to recite the "Rime of Sire Thopas," in which he is interrupted by the host, from its not being worth listening to, but merely "rime dogerel;" and at his request he relates the Tale of Melibeus, "a moral tale virtuous," in prose. In the "Man of Lawes Prologue," he alludes to himself by name, and mentions some of the pieces he had written:—

——————. "but natheles certain
I can right now no thrifty tale sain,
But Chaucer (though he can but lewedly
On metres and on riming craftily)
Hath sayd hem, in swiche English as he can,
Of olde time, as knoweth many a man.
And if he had not sayd hem, leve brother,
In o book, he hath sayd hem in another.
For he hath told of lovers up and doun,
Mo than Ovide made of mentioun

[44] Prologue to the "Rime of Sire Thopas."

In his Epistolis, that ben ful olde.
What shuld I tellen hem, sin they ben tolde?
In youthe he made of Ceys and Alcyon,
And sithen hath he spoke of everich on
Thise noble wives, and thise lovers eke.
Who so that wol his large volume seke
Cleped the seintes legende of Cupide:
Ther may he se the large woundes wide
Of Lucrece, and of Babylon Thisbe;
The swerd of Dido for the false Enee;
The tree of Phillis for hire Demophon;
The plaint of Dejanire, and Hermion,
Of Adriane and Ysiphilee;
The barreine ile stonding in the see;
The dreint Leandre for his fayre Hero:
The teres of Heleine, and eke the wo
Of Briseide, and of Ladomia;
The crueltee of thee, quene Medea,
Thy litel children hanging by the hals,
For thy Jason, that was of love so fals.
O Hipermestra, Penelope, Alceste,
Your wifhood he commendeth with the beste.
But certainly no word ne writeth he
Of thilke wicke ensample of Canace,
That loved hire owen brother sinfully;
(Of all swiche cursed stories I say fy)
Or elles of Tyrius Appolonius,
. . . . . .
And therfore he of ful avisement
N'old never write in non of his sermons
Of swiche unkinde abhominations."

He also mentions many of his Works in the "Legende of Good Women." The God of Love accuses him of being his foe, and hindering his servants

"with thy translacion,
And lettest folke from her devocion

To serve me, and holdest it folie
To serve Love; thou maiest it nat denie,
For in plain text, withouten nede of glose,
Thou hast translated the Romaunt of the Rose,
That is an heresie ayenst my lawe,
And makest wise folke fro me withdrawe:
And of Creseide thou hast saide as the list,
That maketh men to women lesse trist."

. . . . . .

" All be it that he can nat wel endite,
Yet hath he made leude folke delite
To serve you, in preising of your name,
He made the boke that hight the House of Fame,
And eke the Death of Blaunche the Duchesse,
And the Parliament of Foules, as I gesse,
And al the Love of Palamon and Arcite
Of Thebes, though the storie is knowen lite,
And many an himpne for your holy daies,
That highten balades, rondels, virelaies;
And for to speake of other holinesse,
He hath in prose translated Boece,
And made the Life also of Saint Cecile,
He made also, gone is a great while,
Origenes upon the Maudelaine:
Him ought now to have the lese paine,
He hath made many a ley and many a thing."

He says,

" Ne a trewe lover ought me nat to blame
Though that I speke a false lover some shame,
They ought rather with me for to hold
For that I of Creseide wrote or told,
Or of the Rose, what so mine author ment
Algate God wote it was mine entent
To forthren trouth in love, and it cherice,
And to ben ware fro falsenesse and fro vice,
By which ensample this was my mening."

As a " penaunce" for his " trespace,"

" Thou shalt while that thou livest yere by yere
The moste partie of thy time spende
In making of a glorious Legende
Of Good Women, both maidens and wives,
That weren trewe in loving all her lives."

. . . . . .

" And when this Boke is made, yeve it the Quene
On my behalfe, at Eltham or at Shene."

Love afterwards asks him,

" Hast thou nat in a booke in thy cheste
The great goodnesse of the Quene Aceste,
That turned was into a Daiesie?

. . . . . .

And I answerde againe, and said, Yes."

He likewise mentions in that piece his Poem of the " Flower and the Leaf," as is shewn in another extract.[45]

In the " House of Fame" he alludes to himself more frequently than in any other of his productions. The Eagle sent by Jupiter informs him that "the God of Thonder" had of him

——— " routhe,
That thou haste so truely
Long served ententively
His blind nephew Cupido
And faire Venus also,
Without guerdon ever yet,
And natheles hast set thy wit,
Although in thy head full little is,
To make bookes, songs, and dites,
In rime or els in cadence,

[45] Vide p. 80, postea.

As thou best canst in reverence
Of Love, and of his servaunts eke,
That have his service sought, and seke,
And painest thee to praise his art,
Although thou haddest never part;
Wherfore, also God me blesse,
Jovis halt it great humblesse,
And vertue eke, that thou wilt make
A night full oft thine head to ake,
In thy study, so thou writest,
And evermore of love enditest,
In honour of him and praisings."

Jupiter is aware that the Poet had

——— " no tidings
Of Loves folke, if they be glade,
Ne of nothing els that God made,
And not onely fro ferre countree
That no tidings commen to thee,
Not of thy very neighbours,
That dwellen almost at thy dores,
Thou hearest neither that ne this,
For whan thy labour all done is,
And hast made all thy reckenings,
In steade of rest and of new things
Thou goest home to thine house anone,
And al so dombe as a stone,
Thou sittest at another booke
Till fully dased is thy looke,
And livest thus as an Hermite,
Although thine abstinence is lite."

In this passage it is supposed that Chaucer alluded to his duties as Comptroller of the Customs and Subsidies, the accounts or " reckonings " of which he was to write with his own hands. If this conjecture be true, it may also be inferred that he described his

usual habits, that he lived much alone, passing his time, after his official duties were over, in reading; and that though in his seclusion from society he resembled a hermit, he yet was no enemy to the pleasures of the table.

Jupiter's winged messenger then says to him that Fame dwelleth,

> "Right so as thine owne booke telleth,"

and after describing her Palace, the Eagle addresses him by name,

> "Geffray, thou wotest well this," &c.

When asked if he had "come hider to have Fame," he betrays extraordinary indifference to that "last infirmity of noble minds," so commonly the attendant of Genius:

> "'Nay, forsothe, frend,' quod I,
> 'I come not hither, graunt mercy,
> For no soch cause by my heed,
> Sufficeth me as I were deed,
> That no wight have my name in honde
> I wot my selfe best how I stonde,
> For what I drie, or what I thinke,
> I wol my selfe all it drinke:
> Certaine for the more parte
> As ferforth as I can mine art.'"[46]

It has been suggested,[47] that in the following lines Chaucer refers to some heavy

[46] House of Fame, l. 783-792.

[47] Godwin, vol. iv. p. 29.

calamity that had then recently befallen him. Misfortunes are so numerous that there is no difficulty in supposing him to have been in affliction, without seeking for a particular cause: but if, as is supposed, he wrote the House of Fame while he held his offices in the Customs, the event alluded to may have been the last illness of his wife, who appears to have died about 1387:—

——— "Joves his grace,
As I have said will the solace
Finally with these things,
Uncouthe sightes and tidings,
To passe with thine evinesse,
Soch routh hath he of thy distresse,
That thou suffredest debonairly,
And woste they selven utterly,
Desperate of all blisse,
Sith that fortune hath made a misse
The swete of all thine hertes rest,
Languish and eke in poynt to brest,
But he through his mighty melite,
Wil do thee ease, al be it lite."[48]

A few other passages will be quoted from Chaucer's Poems, in illustration of his feelings and taste. In the following lines in the Knightes Tale, he seems to shew a strong belief in predestination:—

"Destinee, ministre general,
That executeth in the world over al
The purveiance that God hath sen beforne;
So strong it is, that though the world had sworne

[48] House of Fame, book iii. l. 917-930.

The contrary of a thing by ya or nay,
Yet somtime it shall fallen on a day
That falleth nat efte in a thousand yere;
For certainly our appetites here,
Be it of werre, or pees, or hate, or love,
All is this ruled by the sight above."

Perhaps a line in his Ballad in "Commendacion of our Ladie," justifies the opinion that he was not skilled in music:

"God wote on Musike I can not, but I gesse
Alas why so, that I might saie or syng."

In the Legende of Goode Women there is a personal description of much interest, as it shews Chaucer's deep love of Nature, whom in another place[49] he thus finely apostrophizes,

"Nature, the vicare of the Almightie Lord."

Of flowers he greatly admired the humble daisy, whose etymology he thus fancifully explains,

"The Daisie, or els the iye of the day,
The emprise and floure of floures alle;"

unless, indeed, as is not improbable, he adverts to that flower metaphorically for a lady of the name of Margaret:

"And as for me, though that I can but lite,
On bookes for to rede, I me delite,
And to hem yeve I faith and full credence,
And in mine harte have hem in reverence
So hartely, that there is game none

[49] Assemble of Foules, l. 379.

That fro my bookes maketh me to gone.
But it be seldome on the holy daie,
Save certainly whan that the month of May
Is comen, and that I heare the foules sing,
And that the floures ginnen for to spring,
Farwell my booke and my devocion.

" Now have I then eke this condicion,
That above all the floures in the mede
That love I most these floures white and rede,
Soch that men callen Daisies in our toun;
To hem I have so grete affectioun,
As I saied erst, whan comen is the Maie,
That in my bedde there daweth me no daie
That I nam up, and walking in the mede
To seen this floure ayenst the sunne sprede
Whan it up riseth early by the morow;
That blisfull sight softinith all my sorow;
So glad am I whan that I have presence
Of it, to doin it all reverence,
As she that is of all flouris floure,
Fulfillid of all vertue and honoure,
And every ilike faire and fresh of hewe,
And ever I love it, and ever ilike newe,
And ever shall till that mine harte die,
All swaere I not of this I woll not lie.

" There loved no wight hotter in his life;
And whan that it is eve I renne blithe,
As sone as evir the sunne ginneth west,
To seen this floure how it woll go to rest;
For feare of night, so hateth she derknesse,
Her chere is plainly spred in the brightnesse
Of the sunne, for there it woll unclose:
Alas that I ne had Englishe rime, or prose
Suffisaunt, this floure to praise aright,
But helpeth ye, that han conning and might,
Ye lovers, that can make of sentement;
In this case ought ye be diligent
To forthren me somwhat in my labour,
Whether ye been with the lefe or with the flour,

For well I wote that ye han here beforne
Of making ropen, and had alway the corne,
And I come after, glening here and there,
And am full glad, if I may find an eare
Of any goodly worde that ye han left;
And though it happen me to rehersen eft
That ye han in your freshe songes saied,
Forbeareth me, and beth not evill apaied,
Sith that ye se I doe it in the honour
Of Love, and eke of service of the flour
Whom that I serve . . . . ." [50]

There is so much cause for supposing Chaucer to have been pressed by pecuniary difficulties towards the close of the reign of Richard the Second, that the verses "to his Emptie Purse" have the interest of reality; while the address to Henry the Fourth[51] seems a petition for that increase of his pension, which he obtained immediately afterwards:

"To you my Purse, and to none other wight,
Complayne I, for ye be my Ladie dere;
I am sorie now that ye be light,
For certes ye now make me heavie chere;
Me were as lefe laide upon a bere,

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[50] Legende of Goode Women, l. 28-82.

[51] Godwin is so affected by the impropriety of Chaucer's thus addressing an Usurper as to suggest that "the Envoy" was not written by him: and unless it can be separated from the verses, he thinks that they also were the production of some other writer. (Vol. iv. p. 145). Yet Godwin was aware of Chaucer's connection with John of Gaunt, and that Henry the Fourth had doubled his pension.

For which unto your mercy thus I crie,
Be heavie againe, or els mote I die.

Now vouchsafe this day or it be night
That I of you the blisful sowne may here,
Or see your colour lyke the sunne bright,
That of yelounesse had never pere;
Ye be my life, ye be my hertes stere;
Quecne of comfort and of good companie,
Be heavy againe, or els mote I die.

Nowe Purse, that art to me my lives light,
And saviour, as downe in this worlde here,
Out of this towne helpe me by your might,
Sith that you woll not be my treasure,
For I am shave as nere as any frere,
But I pray unto your curtesie
Be heavy againe, or els mote I die.

Explicit.

Chaucer unto the Kinge.

O Conquerour of Brutes Albion!
Whiche that by lyne and free election
Been very King, this to you I send,
And ye that may all harmes amende
Have minde upon my supplicacion."

Chaucer more than once speaks of that "scathful harm, condition of poverty,"[52] in terms of such force and truth as would naturally proceed from one by whom its ills had been experienced; and the allusion to the subject in the House of Fame may therefore have been more than a playful fiction:

"Golde . . . . . .
As fine as ducket in Venise,
Of whiche to lite all in my pouche is."

[52] Particularly in "The Man of Lawes Tale."

A passage in the introduction to the "Treatise on the Astrolabe," as well as the mention of his son Lewis, before referred to, is somewhat of a personal nature. Among Chaucer's motives for writing it, was, he says, that "me semeth better to writen unto a child twice a good sentence then he foryete it once. And Lowis if it so be that I shew thee in my lith English as true conclusions touching this matter, and not only as true but as many and subtill conclusions as ben yshewed in Latine in any common treatise of the Astrolabie, conne the more thanke, and pray God save the King that is Lord of this langage, and all that him faith beareth and obeyeth everiche in his degree, the more and the lasse. But considereth well that I ne usurpe not to have founden this werk of my labour or of mine engine. I nam but a leaued compilatour of the labour of olde astrologiens, and have translated in mine English only for thy doctrine; and with this swerd shall I sleen envie."

If the authenticity of the following passage in some manuscripts of Chaucer's Works were unimpeachable, it would be one of the most interesting he ever wrote. At the end of "The Persones Tale," in all complete manuscripts, and in both the editions printed by Caxton, this affecting paragraph occurs:

> "Now preye I to hem alle that herken this litel tretise or reden it, that if ther be any thing in it that liketh hem, that therof they thanken our Lord Jesu

Crist, of whom procedeth all witte and all godenesse; and if ther be any thing that displeseth hem, I preye hem also that they arrette it to the defaute of myn unkonning, and not to my wille, that wold fayn have seyde better if I hadde had konning; for oure boke seyth, all that is writen is writen for oure doctrine, and that is myn entente. Wherfore I beseke you mekely for the mercie of God that ye preye for me, that Crist have mercie of me and foryeve me my giltes, and namely of myn translations and enditinges of worldly vanitees, the which I revoke in my Retractions, as the boke of Troilus, the boke also of Fame, the boke of the five and twenty Ladies, the boke of the Duchesse, the boke of Seint Valentines day of the Parlement of briddes, the tales of Canterbury, thilke that sounen unto sinne, the boke of the Leon, and many an other boke, if they were in my remembraunce, and many a song and many a lecherous lay, Crist of his grete mercie foryeve me the sinne. But of the translation of Boës of consolation, and other bokes of legendes of Seints, and of omelies, and moralite, and devotion, that thanke I oure Lord Jesu Crist, and his blisful mother, and alle the Seintes in heven, beseking hem that they fro hensforth unto my lyves ende sende me grace to bewaile my giltes, and to stodien to the savation of my soule, and graunte me grace of verray penance, confession and satisfaction to don in this present lif, thorgh the benigne grace of him, that is King of Kinges and preste of alle prestes, that bought us with the precious blode of his herte, so that I mote ben on of hem atte the laste day of dome that shullen be saved; qui cum Deo patre et Spiritu sancto vivis et regnas Deus per omnia secula. Amen."

Tyrwhitt, in a note deserving of great attention, after fully discussing the question, expresses his suspicion of the genuineness of the passage; but there is nothing unrea-

sonable in believing that Chaucer, when verging on the grave, under the influence of spiritual counsels, and his mind filled with the most solemn and important thoughts, should have regretted the composition of any work of "worldly vanities," or in his having committed that regret to writing. At such a moment in any age, and still more when Chaucer lived, a religious mind may have reflected on some of his writings with sincere, however needless, compunction. It would therefore be unsafe to reject the addition as a forgery; but the liberties often taken by Monkish transcribers justify great hesitation in receiving as genuine whatever did not obviously form part of the original piece. One fact in favour of the authenticity of the passage must not be overlooked. Among Chaucer's works is enumerated the "Boke of the Lion," of which, it is presumed, no other notice exists than in Lydgate's Prologue to his translation of Boccaccio's Fall of Princes; and as Lydgate is nearly correct in the list he has there given of Chaucer's other productions, it is not likely that he should have ascribed the "Boke of the Leon" to him without authority, or that it should have been inserted in that addition to the Parson's Tale from Lydgate's or any other person's invention. The objection taken by Tyrwhitt to the genuineness of the passage, that the Romaunt of the Rose is not among the regretted pieces, has little force. A man who

has written much may not in enumerating his works remember the title, since he is known sometimes even to have forgotten the authorship itself, of some of his productions.

To one Poem a statement is attached which, if true, would, even more than its own pathetic character, ensure to it a profound interest, as in an early copy it is said to have been "made by him upon his dethe bedde leying in his grete anguysse."[53] Though the Verses are suspected not to be Chaucer's by some competent judges, their authenticity is fully admitted by Tyrwhitt.

Godwin also considers them genuine; and having adopted the statement respecting the circumstances under which they were composed, he comments with his usual eloquence on the satisfactory proof the verses afford of the state of mind with which Chaucer awaited the last awful change. But if they were not actually written in his last hours, they nevertheless shew him to have been deeply influenced by religion; and the less imminent the prospect of dissolution, the more likely would it be that they proceeded from habitual sentiments, and not merely from the feelings inspired by a death-bed. "They are expressive," in Godwin's opinion, of that serene

[53] Cottonian MS. Otho A xviii. This manuscript was destroyed in the fire which consumed so many volumes of the Cottonian library. It is found, Tyrwhitt says, without that statement in two other MSS.

frame of temper, that pure and celestial equanimity which so eminently characterized the genius of Chaucer and of Shakespeare:

"Flie fro the prease, and dwell with soothfastnesse:
Suffise unto thy good, though it be small,
For horde hath hate, and climbing tikelnesse;
Prease hath envie, and wele is blent over all;
Savour no more than thee behove shall;
Rede well thy selfe that other folke canst rede,
And trouth thee shall deliver, it is no drede.

Paine thee not ech crooked to redresse,
In trust of her that tourneth as a ball,
Great rest standeth in litle businesse;
Beware also to spurne again a nall;
Strive not as doeth a crocke with a wall;
Deme thy selfe that demest others dede,
And trouth thee shall deliver, it is no drede.

That thee is sent receive in buxomenesse,
The wrastlyng of this world asketh a fall;
Here is no home, here is but wildernesse,
Forthe pilgrime, forthe beast out of thy stall,
Looke up on high, and thanke God of all,
Weive thy lusts, and let thy ghost thee lede,
And trouth thee shall deliver, it is no drede."

It has been said that Chaucer, when not employed in his official duties, resided chiefly at Woodstock,[54] which fact is assumed from

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[54] Godwin's Life of Chaucer, ii. 99 to 103; iv. 68, 169, 172. He mentions a house in Woodstock Park as being described in deeds as "Chaucer's House," but this was more probably the house of Thomas Chaucer, to whom the Manor of Woodstock was granted by Henry the Fourth, ten years after the Poet's death. Vide p. 110 postea.

some lines in his "Dream," in his "Book of the Duchess," and in his "Parliament of Birdis;" but neither of those Poems will really bear such an interpretation; and it is remarkable, that the only place in his works in which he mentions Woodstock has not been cited in support of the conjecture. Tradition, and a passage in his Treatise on the Astrolabe, are also adduced in corroboration of that statement; and he is supposed to have resided there until about 1397, when it is said by Godwin that the Duke of Lancaster presented him with Donington Castle, near Newbury in Berkshire, with the intention, "in the feudal sense, to ennoble him!"[55] Whether Chaucer ever resided at Woodstock cannot be determined; but the fact is very unlikely, and the only notice of that place in his works, by name, is in the "Cuckow and the Nightingale," wherein he says that The Parliament of Birds

> "Shall be without nay
> The morrow after Saint Valentines day,
> Under a maple that is faire and grene,
> Before the chamber window of the Quene,
> At *Woodstocke* upon the grene lay."

In that piece he observes, that

> "Love is in yong folke but rage,
> And in olde folke a great dotage,"

and speaks of himself as being "olde and unlusty."

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[55] Godwin's Life of Chaucer, iv. 93—106, 173.

There are strong reasons for believing that neither Chaucer nor the Duke of Lancaster ever possessed Donington Castle. It belonged to Sir Richard Abberbury in 1392,[56] and in 1415 was the property of Sir John Phelip, the first husband of Alice, daughter and heiress of Thomas Chaucer.[57] The idea, that the Poet was patronized by Queen Anne, consort of Richard the Second, arises chiefly, if not entirely, from his saying in the "Legende of Goode Women," which is stated to have been composed at her suggestion,[58]—

> "And when this boke is made, zeve it to the Quene
> On my behalfe, at Eltham or at Shene."—l. 496-7.

That Chaucer stood high in the favour of the Duke of Lancaster is unquestionable; but there is nothing to prove, however probable it may be, that the annuities or offices bestowed on him by the King were obtained through that Prince's influence. The piece entitled "Book of the Duchess" is said by Lydgate[59] to have been written on the de-

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[56] Rot. Pat. 16 Ric. II. p. 3. m. 13.

[57] Esch. 3 Hen. V. nº 42.

[58] Lydgate says,

"This Poete wrote at the request of the Quene
A Legende of perfite holynesse
Of Good Women"

[59] "He wrote also ful many a day agone

. . . . . .

. . . The Dethe eke of Blaunche the Duchesse."

cease of Blanch, the Duke's first consort, who died in 1369, and who is thus described:

> ——— " Faire white she hete,
> That was my Ladies name right,
> She was thereto faire and bright,
> She had not her name wrong."

Chaucer himself calls it, in his Legende of Goode Women, " The Dethe of Blaunche the Duchesse," but it is sometimes called " Chaucer's Dream;" and the " Complaint of the Black Knight" has been thought to refer to events in the history of the Duke her husband.[60]

The little that is known of Chaucer's character is derived from the glimpses which he himself affords of his taste, habits, and feelings in his works; but with these slight exceptions, all the minute traits that impart to personal history its greatest charm are entirely lost. Without them, any account of an individual must be dry and harsh; presenting indeed a rude outline of form and features, but unattended by those lights, shades, and details which impart grace, expression, and interest, alike to painting, sculpture, and biography. While, however, it is lamented that more has not been discovered of the great Father of English Poetry, it is a matter of congratulation that after the lapse

[60] Godwin's Life of Chaucer, iii. 149 to 157.

of four centuries, so much has been ascertained respecting him. Compared with many eminent writers who lived nearer our own times, the particulars of Chaucer are numerous and satisfactory; and though all obvious, and indeed all probable sources of information have been exhausted for this Memoir, many facts may yet be discovered of him when the arrangement of the Public Records, now in progress, shall be completed.

By his literary contemporaries Chaucer's poetical genius seems to have been justly appreciated, while the documents that have been cited, show the estimation in which his abilities for public business were held by his Sovereign and the Government. It is a remarkable fact that every authentic notice of him has been derived from records of the confidence and bounty of the three Monarchs under whom he lived, or of the favour of an eminent Prince of the Blood Royal. Had he not, fortunately for the literary character of the Country, been thus distinguished and rewarded, his Works and the testimony borne to his merits by the poetical writers of his age, would now be the only proofs of his existence. Tradition throws less than her usually weak and flickering light upon his history, and even that little is of no value. He has himself told us that where genuine information is not to be obtained, we must

be satisfied with whatever may be found in "old Books:"—

> "——— If that olde Bookes were away,
> Ilorne were of all remembraunce the kay;
> Well ought us then, honouren and beleve
> These bookes, there we han non othir preve." [61]

But if nothing else were known of Chaucer than what occurs in the "books" of Occleve, Gower, Lydgate, or Bale and Leland, how imperfect and erroneous would be our knowledge of his Life!

The versatility of his talents was extraordinary. Though known to posterity only as one of the greatest of our Poets, whose productions, in variety, merit, and extent, would seem to afford sufficient occupation for the life of an ordinary man, Chaucer filled the various stations of a Soldier, of Valet and Esquire of the King's Household, of Envoy on numerous foreign missions, of Comptroller of the Customs, of Clerk of the Works, and of Member of Parliament. Nor is it improbable that other duties were entrusted to him both by the King, and by the Duke of Lancaster; for there is not the slightest information of his pursuits or employments during many years of his life. These blanks extend from his birth in 1328 until he served in the French wars in 1359; again from 1359 to 1367; from 1384 to 1386; from 1386 to 1389; and from 1395 until his decease; forming alto-

[61] Legende of Goode Women, l. 25-28.

gether, from the time he became of age in 1349, until 1393, when he was sixty-five, no less than twenty-two years. Even in many of those years in which some trace of him has been found, the notices afford no knowledge of his occupations, as they consist only of entries of the receipt of his pension.

Much attention has been paid to the amount of Chaucer's income at different periods;[62] but the extreme difficulty of ascertaining the comparative value of money between the fourteenth and nineteenth century, renders it almost impossible to arrive at a satisfactory conclusion on the subject. There is no proof, or indeed reason to suppose, that he inherited lands or other property, or that any estate was ever permanently granted to him; and the idea of his having obtained the manor of Woodstock and Donington Castle, to which all his biographers have attached so much importance, is a delusion. From 1367 to 1388, he received a pension of twenty marks or 13*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.* per annum; and from 1374 to 1378, an allowance for a pitcher of wine daily, which was commuted for 10*l.* 5*s.* 3¼*d.* a year. He had, moreover, after 1374, an annuity of 10*l.* for life from the Duke of Lancaster: his wife was in the annual receipt of ten marks after 1366; and he derived some advantage from the grant of two wardships in 1375. The joint income of him-

[62] Godwin, vol. ii. pp. 329, 494, 505.

self and his wife in the latter part of the reign of Edward the Third seems therefore to have been about 40*l.* per annum.

Besides his Pensions, Chaucer held the office of Comptroller of the Customs, the emoluments of which are not known; and though his pension was given only until he should be otherwise provided for, he received it all the time he filled that situation.

In 1378, he gained about 3*l.* per annum by the grant of an annuity of twenty marks, or 13*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.* instead of the allowance for a pitcher of wine; but his frequent missions abroad make it impossible to estimate his resources at that time. An addition, but of uncertain amount, was made to his income in 1382 by his appointment of Comptroller of the Petty Customs. In 1386, he was superseded in both his offices; in 1388, his annuities were transferred to another person; and the pension to his wife had ceased on her death in the preceding year, so that all he is known to have received between May 1388, and his being made Clerk of the King's Works in 1389, was his pension of 10*l.* from the Duke of Lancaster. There are no means of estimating the value of the Clerkship of the Works, which, however, he did not retain more than two years; and for aught that appears to the contrary, he had nothing besides the Duke of Lancaster's annuity of 10*l.* between September 1391 and February 1394, when the King granted him 20*l.* for life. His income was

consequently about 30*l.* from 1394 to 1398; but in October of that year, it was increased by the yearly gift of a ton of wine, which was probably not worth more[63] than 5*l.* Henry the Fourth in 1399 added forty marks to his pension, making 51*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.* from the Crown, and 10*l.* from the revenues of the Duchy of Lancaster, being altogether 61*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.* per annum.

Godwin, who took much trouble to calculate the value of money in the fourteenth century, thinks that every sum should be multiplied by eighteen,[64] which would make Chaucer's and his wife's income between 1374 and 1387, from their pensions only, equal to about 720*l.* and in the last year of his life to 1180*l.* But this calculation is certainly much too high; and perhaps ten times the nominal value is a nearer approximation to the truth.

If then Chaucer derived only half as much from his offices as from his pensions, he must for a considerable period have had a sufficient income; and though he was latterly impoverished, his resources shortly before his death were fully equal to his necessities, even if they did not yield him the luxuries of life. From his foreign missions it is not likely that he gained much, if anything; and it is extremely improbable that he accumulated money. Had he died possessed of lands,

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[63] See Godwin's inquiry on the subject, vol. ii. p. 494.

[64] Life of Chaucer, vol. ii. pp. 331, 492.

which were held of the Crown *in capite*, the fact would have been shown by an Inquisition.

In considering Chaucer's pecuniary circumstances, it should be remembered that Thomas Chaucer, of whose filiation there can be little doubt, became on his marriage about 1395, a person of extensive property and some political influence; and it would be extraordinary if he did not obtain assistance from his son. The obscurity in which all Chaucer's family relations are enveloped, makes this, however, mere matter of conjecture; but false inferences are not likely to be drawn from the usual conduct of a son to his father. Had the Poet left a Will, or had such a document been made by Thomas Chaucer, this Memoir would probably not have been so deficient in facts respecting their domestic history.

The allusions to Chaucer by his contemporaries Gower and Occleve, are extremely pleasing, their eulogiums on his merits having been founded upon personal acquaintance. Gower's verses in which he mentions him have been already cited.

Occleve commemorated Chaucer not only with his pencil, but with his pen. In his Book "De Regimine Principis," he thus expresses his sorrow for his death:

> "What schal I calle the, what is thi name?
> Hoccleve, fadir myn, men clepen me;
> Hoccleve, sone; I wis fadir yat same;

Sone, I have herd or this men speke of the;
Thou were aqueynted with Chaucer pardee;
God have his soule best of any wyght,
Sone, I wole holde the that I have hyght.[65]

. . . . . .

Again,

"But weylawey! so is myn hert wo
That the honour of Englyssh tonge is deed
Of which I wont was han counsail and reed.
O maister deere and fadir reverent,[66]
My maister Chaucer, flour of eloquence,
Mirour of fructuous entendement,
O universel fadir in science!
Allas that thou thyn excellent prudence
In thi bed mortel mightist naght by qwethe
What eiled Deth? allas! whi wolde he sle the?

"O Deth! though didest naght harme singuleer
In slaghtere of him, but al this land it smertith;
But nathelees yit hast thou no power
His name [to] sle; his hy vertu astertith
Unslayn fro the, which ay us lyfly hertyth
With bookes of his ornat endytyng,
That is to al this land enlumynyng."[67]

From another passage, it would seem that

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[65] Harleian MS. 4866 fo. 34.

[66] The terms "Father" and "Master" were long used to indicate respect for age, and for superiority in any pursuit or science. The former is thus explained by Chaucer in the Wife of Bath's Tale:

"Now, Sire, of elde that ye repreven me:
And certes, Sire, though non auctoritee
Were in no book ye gentiles of honour
Sain that men shuld an olde wight honour
And *clepe him Fader*, for your gentillesse;
And auctours shal I finden as I gesse."

[67] Harleian MS. 4866 fo. 36.

Occleve, who was many years younger than Chaucer, had profited by his instructions:

> "Mi deere maistir God his soule quyte;
> And fadir Chaucer fayn wolde han me taght,
> But I was dul and lerned lite or naght."

He then laments the loss of him as "this landes verray tresor and richesse," and says, "Deth was too hasty," for

> "She myghte han taried her vengeance a while,
> Til that sum man had egal to the be:
> Nay, lat be that; sche knew wel that this yle
> May never man forth brynge like to the,
> And hir office needes do mot she;
> God bad hir so, I truste as for thi beste:
> O maister, maister! God thi soule reste!"[68]

It is however in the part of his work "De consilio habendo in omnibus factis," that Occleve took the most effectual mode of perpetuating Chaucer. After calling him

> "The firste fyndere of our faire langage,"

describing him as his "fadir," his "worthi maister," and invoking the blessed Virgin, in whose honour, he says, Chaucer had "wroot ful many a lyne," to intercede for his eternal happiness, Occleve adds,

> "Althogh his lyfe be queynt,[69] the resemblaunce
> Of him hath in me so fresshe lyflynesse,
> That to putte othir men in remembraunce

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[68] Harleian MS. 4866, fo. 39 b.

[69] Quenched, extinguished.

Of his persone I have heere his lyknesse
Do make, to this ende in sothfastnesse,
That thei that have of hym lest thought and mynde
By this peynture may ageyn him fynde."[70]

In the margin he has given the coloured portrait of Chaucer which will be afterwards described; and he says,

" The ymages that in the chirche been,
Maken folk thenke on God and on his seyntes,
Whan the ymages thei beholden and seen;
Were oft unsyte of hem causith restreyntes
Of thoughtes gode, whan a thing depeynt is,
Or entailed, if men take of it heede,
Thoght of the lyknesse it wil in hym brede.

Yit somme holden oppynyoun and sey,
That none ymages schuld i maked be;
Thei erren foule and goon out of the wey;
Of trouth have thei scant sensibilite;
Passe over that now, blessid Trinite
Uppon my maistres soule mercy have,
For him Lady eke thi mercy I crave."[71]

Lydgate, who lived in the next generation, mentions Chaucer in terms of esteem and admiration. Speaking of the Canterbury Tales in his Prologue to the Story of Thebes, he calls him

" Floure of Poetes throughout all Bretaine;"

and in the Prologue to the Translation of Boccaccio's " Fall of Princes," where he gives a list of Chaucer's works, he says,

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[70] Harleian MS. 4866, fo. 91.
[71] Ib. fo. 91.

" My maister Chaucer, with his fresh commedies,
Is deed, alas! chefe poete of Bretayne,
That somtyme made full piteous tragedies,
The fall of princes, he did also complayne,
As he that was of makyng soverayne,
Whom all this lande of right ought preferre,
Sithe of our langage he was the lode-sterre.

. . . . . .

In youthe he made a translacion
Of a boke whiche called is Trophe
In Lumbarde tonge, as men may rede and se,
And in our vulgar, long or that he deyde,
Gave it the name of Troylous and Cresseyde.
Whiche for to rede lovers them delyte,
They have therin so grete devocyon;
And to his poete also hymselfe to quyte,
Of Boecius boke The Consolacioun
Made in his tyme an hole translacion;
And to his sonne that called was Lowys
He made a treatise, full noble and of gret prise.
Upon that labour, in full notable forme
Set them in order with ther divisyons,
Menns wittes to accomplysshe and conforme,
To understonde by full expert reasons,
By domifyeng of sondrie mancions,
The rote out sought at the ascendent,
To forne or he gafe any jugement.
He wrote also full many a day agone
Daunt in Englyssh, hymself so doth expresse,
The pytous story of Ceix and Alcion,
And the Deth also of Blaunche the Duchesse;
And notably dyd his busynesse,
By great avyse his wittes to dispose
To translate The Romaynt of the Rose.
Thus in vertu he set all his entent,
Idelnesse and vices for to fle;
Of Fowles also he wrote the Parlyment,
Therin remembrynge of ryall Egles thre,
Howe in their choyse they felt adversite,

To fore Nature profered the batayle
Eche for his partye, if he wolde avayle.
He did also his diligence and payne
In our vulgar to translate and endyte
Orygene upon the Maudelayn;
And of the Lyon a boke he dyd wryte;
Of Annelida, of false Arcite
He made a Complaynte doleful and piteous;
And of the broche whiche that Vulcanus
At Thebes wrought, full diverse of nature;
Ovyde wryteth whoso therof had a sight
For high desire he shuld nat endure,
But he it had never be glade ne light,
And if he had it onys in his might,
Like as my maister saith and writeth in dede,
It to conserve he shuld aye live in drede.
This poete wrote, at the request of the quene,
A Legende of perfite holynesse,
Of good Women to fynd out nynetene
That did excell in bounte and fayrenes,
But for his labour and besinesse
Was importable his wittes to encombre
In all this world to fynd so grete a nombre.
He made the boke of Canterbury Tales,
Whan the Pylgryms rode on pylgrymage
Throughout Kent, by hylles and by dales,
And all the stories told in their passage,
Endited them full well in our langage,
Some of knighthode, some of gentilnesse,
And some of love, and some of perfitenes,
And some also of grete moralite,
Some of disporte, including grete sentence:
In prose he wrote the Tale of Melibe
And of his wife, that called was Prudence;
And of Grisildes perfite pacience;
And how the Monke of stories new and olde
Piteous tragedies by the weye tolde.
This sayed poete, my maister, in his dayes
Made and composed ful many a fresh dite,

Complaintes, ballades, roundeles, virelaies,
Full delectable to heren and to se,
For which men shulde of right and equite,
Sith he of English in making was the best,
Pray unto God to yeve his soule good rest."

But Lydgate's best eulogium is in his Praise of the Virgin Mary,* printed by Caxton:

"And eke my master Chauceris now is grave,
The noble rethor poete of Brytayne,
That worthy was the lawrer to have
Of poetrye, and the palme attayne,
That made first to dystylle and rayne
The gold dewe dropys of speche and eloquence
Into our tunge thrugh his excellence,
And fonde the flouris first of rethoryke
Our rude speche only to enlumyne,
That in our tunge was never none hym lyke;
For as the sonne doth in heven shyne
In mydday spere down to us by lyne,
In whos presence no sterre may appere,
Right so his ditees withouten ony pere."

To these testimonies to Chaucer's merits by his own countrymen, and probably, personal friends, can now be added a very interesting ballad (hitherto unpublished) addressed to him by Eustache Deschamps, a contemporary French Poet.[72] Though Deschamps professes so great an admiration of Chaucer as to call him a Socrates in phi-

[72] This ballad has been obligingly communicated by Thomas Wright, Esq. who received it from M. Paulin of Paris. It occurs in the MS. Reg. Paris, No. 7219, fol. 62.

losophy, a Seneca in morals, and an Angel in conduct, he describes him only as a "great Translator." He appears to have sent Chaucer, by a person called Clifford, a copy of his own writings, and to have requested a copy of one of his works in return:

"O Socrates, plains de philosophie,
Seneque en mœurs et angles en pratique,
Ovides graus en ta poeterie,
Bries en parler, saiges en rethorique,
Aigles tres haultz qui par ta theorique
Enlumines le regne d' Eneas,
L'isle aux geans, ceulx de Bruth, et qui as
Seme les fleurs et plante le rosier
Aux ignorans de la langue Pandras;
Grant translateur, noble Geoffroy Chaucier.

Tu es damours mondains dieux, en Albie,
Et de la rose, en la terre angelique
Qui dangels Saxonne est puis fleurie;
Angleterre delle ce nom s'applique.
Le derrenier en l'ethimologique
En bon Angles le livre translatas:
Et un vergier ou du plant demandas
De ceuls qui font pour eulx auctoriser,
N'a pas long temps que tu edifias,
Grant translateur, noble Geoffroy Chaucier.

A toy pour ce, de la fontaine Helye
Requier avoir un ouvrage autentique,
Dont la doys est du tout en ta baillie,
Pour rafrecir d'elle ma soix ethique:
Qu'en ma Gaule serai paralitique
Jusques a ce que tu m'abuveras.
Eustace sui qui de mon plans aras;
Mais preus en gre les euvres d'escolier
Que, par Clifford, de moy avoir pourras,
Grant translateur, noble Geffroi Chaucier.

L'ENVOY.

Poete hault loenge destinye,
Et ton jardin ne seroie qu'ortie
Considere ce qui j'ay dit premier,
Ton noble plan, ta douce melodie;
Mais pour scavoir, de rescrire te prie,
Grant translateur, noble GEOFFRY CHAUCIER."

The affection of Occleve has made Chaucer's person better known than that of any individual of his age. The portrait of which an engraving illustrates this Memoir, is taken from Occleve's painting already mentioned in the Harleian MS. 4866, which he says was painted from memory after Chaucer's decease, and which is apparently the only genuine portrait in existence. The figure, which is half-length, has a back ground of green tapestry. He is represented with grey hair and beard, which is biforked, he wears a dark coloured dress and hood, his right hand is extended, and in his left he holds a string of beads. From his vest a black case is suspended, which appears to contain a knife, or possibly "a penner,"[73] or pen-case. The expression of the countenance is intelligent; but the fire of the eye seems quenched, and evident marks of advanced age appear on the countenance. This is incomparably the best portrait of Chaucer yet discovered.

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[73] "Prively a *penner* gan he borwe,
And in a lettre wrote he all his sorwe."
Marchant's Tale, l. 9753.

A full-length portrait is found in an early if not contemporary copy of Occleve's Poems in the Royal Manuscript 17 D. vi. He appears very old, with grey hair and beard: he holds a string of beads in his left hand, and his right arm is extended, as if speaking earnestly His vest, hood, stockings, and pointed boots are all black. Over the figure is written, in the same hand as the Poems, "Chaucers ymage."[74]

There is a third portrait in a copy of the Canterbury Tales made about the reign of King Henry the Fifth, being within twenty years of the Poet's death, in the Lansdowne MS. 851. The figure, which is a small full-length, is placed in the initial letter of the volume. He is dressed in a long grey gown, with red stockings, and black shoes fastened with black sandals round the ankles. His

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[74] A Portrait once existed in the Cotton MS. Otho A xviii, but it was destroyed in the fire by which that library suffered. A full-length portrait was painted in the copy of Occleve's Poems in the Harleian MS. 4826, but was long since cut out, an act thus denounced in rude doggerel about the time of Queen Elizabeth:—

"Off worthy Chawcer
Here the pickture stood
That muckh did wryght
And alle to doe us good:
Summe furyous foole
Have cutt the same in twayne
His deed doe shewe
He bare a barren brayne."

head is bare, and the hair closely cut. In his right hand he holds an open book; and a knife or pencase, as in the other portraits, is attached to his vest.

A copy of Occleve's portrait, in a manuscript in the possession of the Rev. Mr. Tyson, was engraved in the Gentleman's Magazine[75] in 1792; and if that ill executed plate can be depended upon, it differs from those before mentioned in not having the knife at his vest.

A fourth portrait is given in a copy of the Canterbury Tales now in the possession of Lord Francis Egerton, and is engraved in the "Illustrations of the Lives and Writings of Gower and Chaucer." In that painting the Poet is represented on a small white horse with black harness. His figure is small, short, and rather stout: he wears a long dark-coloured dress and hood, with a girdle, and a purse or gipciere, and he is booted and spurred.

A fifth portrait on vellum, with an account of Chaucer in a modern hand, is in the Additional MS. 5141, in the British Museum, and has been lately engraved.[76] It is a full-length, and in one corner is the date 1402, and in another corner a daisy; but it has no pretensions to the genuineness of Occleve's painting in the Harleian MS. 4866, and is

[75] Vol. LXII. p. 614.

[76] Shaw's Illustrations.

perhaps not older than the reign of Queen Elizabeth.

Other portraits exist in the Picture Gallery at Oxford (an engraving of which forms the frontispiece of Urry's edition of his Works, printed in 1721), in the British Museum, and at Knowle. These are on board, and resemble the one last mentioned; but they seem to have been all formed from Occleve's painting, long after his time.

Urry and Grainger mention an original portrait which "was said to have been in the possession of George Greenwood of Chasteton in Gloucestershire," taken when he was about thirty years old; and other portraits are said to be extant, but their authenticity is very questionable. The picture engraved in Godwin's Life of Chaucer, which was formerly in the house at Huntingdon in which Oliver Cromwell was born, could not possibly have been a portrait of the Poet.

All the early portraits bear much resemblance to each other; and the probability of their being strong likenesses is increased by their agreeing with the description which Chaucer has given of himself in the Canterbury Tales before quoted, wherein he says he was a "puppet," "small and fair of face," and "elvish," that is, according to Tyrwhitt, shy and reserved; and that he was in the habit of looking steadfastly on the ground.

Thomas Chaucer, who is presumed to have been the Poet's eldest son, was probably born about the year 1367, and became, by his marriage and services, a person of considerable importance. Between December 1391 and 1404, he married Matilda, the second daughter and coheiress of Sir John Burghersh,[77] with whom he acquired large estates in Oxfordshire, among which was Ewelme, and in many other counties. Thomas Chaucer was appointed Chief Butler to Richard the Second;[78] and on the 20th of March 1399, the King gave him twenty marks a year, in recompence of certain offices (not specified) which had been granted to him for life by the Duke of Lancaster, but to which the King had appointed William le Scrope, Earl of Wiltshire.[79] In the same month he paid the King five marks for confirmation of

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[77] Esch. 15 Ric. II. p. 1, n. 8. whence it appears that Sir John Burghersh died on Thursday after the Feast of St. Matthew (the 21st of September) 1391, leaving two daughters his coheirs, viz. Margaret, then the wife of Sir John Grenville, Knt. and fifteen years old; and Matilda, then twelve years of age. The marriage of the said Matilda with Thomas Chaucer is stated in the Inquisition taken on his decease. As their only child, Alice, Countess of Suffolk, was above thirty years of age in 1435, and above thirty-two in 1436, she must have been born about 1404, which shews that her mother, who was unmarried in 1391, must have been married before 1403.

[78] Vide Rot. Pat. 12 Hen. IV. m. 34.

[79] Rot. Pat. 22 Ric. II. p. m. 7.

two annuities of 10*l.* each, charged on the Honour of Leicester, which John late Duke of Lancaster had granted to him.[80] These facts are of importance, as they shew that he, as well as the Poet and the Poet's wife, and apparently also his daughter Elizabeth, were patronized by that Prince.

King Henry the Fourth ascended the throne in September 1399, and on the 23rd of the following month he confirmed the annuity granted to Chaucer in March 1399, of twenty marks.[81] Three days afterwards, the 26th of October 1399, the King granted to Thomas Chaucer, Esq. the Offices of Constable of Wallingford Castle and Steward of the Honours of Wallingford and St. Valery and of the Chiltern Hundreds, for life, receiving therefrom 40*l.* a year, with 10*l.* additional for his deputy.[82] In June 1400, his annuities being in arrear, the King directed the Receiver of the Honour of Leicester to pay "nostre bien aime escuier Thomas Chaucer" the sum of 10*l.* then due to him.[83] On the 5th of November 1402, he was appointed Chief Butler to the King for life;[84] and in May 1406, he

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[80] Registrum Johannis Ducis Lancastriæ.

[81] Rot. Pat. 1 Hen. IV. p. 1, m. 10.

[82] Rot. Patent. 1 Hen. IV. p. 1, m. 10.

[83] Register of the Duchy of Lancaster, CC. No. 15, fo. 61.

[84] Rot. Patent. 4 Hen. IV. m. 19; and Rot. Parl. iv. 178 b.

was an arbitrator respecting the manor of Hinton in Northamptonshire.[85] On the 23rd of February 1411, the Queen granted him the farm of the manors of Woodstock, Hauburgh, Wotton, and Stonfield, with the hundred of Wotton, to hold the same during her life; and on the 15th of the following month, the King assigned him the said manors and hundred for life, after the Queen's death.[86] This grant, which tends to shew that Thomas Chaucer must have rendered some particular services to the Queen Consort, is the earliest evidence of the connection of any member of the Chaucer family with Woodstock. He represented Oxfordshire in Parliament in 1402, 1408, 1409, 1412, 1414, 1423, 1427, and 1429; and in the Parliament that met at Westminster on Monday after the octaves of St. Martin in 1414, he was chosen Speaker of the Commons.[87] On the 4th of June 1414, by the appellation of Thomas Chaucer "Domicellus," instead of Esquire, he was appointed a Commissioner to treat for Henry the Fifth's marriage with Katherine of France; and to receive the homage of the Duke of Burgundy.[88] In the same year he obtained a confirmation of all grants made to him by John late Duke of Lancaster, by

[85] Rot. Parl. vol. iii. p. 573.
[86] Rot. Patent. 12 Hen. IV. m. 7.
[87] Rot. Parl. vol. iv. p. 35.
[88] Rot. Franc. 2 Hen. V. m. 22, and m. 19.

Richard the Second, or by Henry the Fourth.[89] In 1415, he was in the army under Henry the Fifth in France, with a retinue of twelve men-at-arms and thirty-seven archers: he was present at the battle of Agincourt;[90] and served in most of the expeditions under that monarch.[91] On the 1st of October 1417 he was one of the Ambassadors to treat for peace with France;[92] and after the accession of Henry the Sixth, Parliament consented to his holding the office of Chief Butler, which had been confirmed to him by Henry the Fourth,[93] but in which he had been superseded in March 1418.[94] In January 1424, he was appointed a member of the King's Council, with a salary of 40*l.* per annum;[95] and in May 1425, he was one of the Commissioners in Parliament to decide on the dispute between the Earl Marshal and the Earl of Warwick for precedency.[96] In February 1427, he was abroad in the King's service;[97] and he was employed on many other occasions of

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[89] Rot. Parl. vol. iv. p. 39.

[90] History of the Battle of Agincourt, ed. 1832, pp. 358. 377.

[91] Rot. Franc. 8 Hen. V. m. 4.

[92] Rot. Norman. 5 Hen. V. m. 24, and 19. Ed. 1835, pp. 167-170, 205.

[93] Rot. Parl. vol. iv. p. 178 b.

[94] Rot. Norman. 5 Hen. V. m. 7. Ed. 1835, p. 284.

[95] Rot. Parl. vol. iv. p. 201.

[96] Rot. Parl. vol. iv. p. 262.

[97] Rot. Franc. 5 Hen. VI. m. 14.

trust and importance during the reigns of Henry the Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth, but never attained a higher rank than that of Esquire.

Philippa Duchess of York, who was distantly related to his wife, by her Will, dated on the Feast of St. Gregory 1430-1, appointed Thomas Chaucer one of her executors, and bequeathed one hundred marks to him.[98] In 1431 he, John Forrester,[99] and others were the attornies of John Earl of Somerset, to deliver seisin of lands in Somersetshire.[1] Several notices of him occur in the Proceedings of the Privy Council,[2] whence it appears that he was often present in the Council; and his name occurs in a list prepared in February 1436, (though then dead) of persons of whom it was proposed to borrow money for support of the war in France. He was marked for the large sum of 200*l.* being much more than was demanded from any other person except the Bishops of Ex-

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[98] Nichols' Royal Wills, p. 228.

[99] A Richard Forrester was one of the Poet's attornies in May 1378. John Earl of Somerset was the eldest son of Katherine Swynford by John of Gaunt; and if Thomas Chaucer was the son of Philippa Roet, he was the Earl's first cousin.

[1] Charter in the British Museum 43 E 18.

[2] Proceedings of the Privy Council, vol. iii. pp. 148, 155, 157, 163, 169, 266, 267, 286, and vol. iv. pp. 98, 263, 303, 304.

eter and Ely, the Dean of Lincoln, and Sir John Cornwall, afterwards Lord Fanhope.[3]

Thomas Chaucer died in November 1434,[4] and Matilda his wife on the 28th of April 1436;[5] and were buried under a handsome monument in Ewelme church in Oxfordshire, with this inscription:[6]

HIC JACENT THOMAS CHAUCER ARMIGER QUONDAM DOMINUS ISTIUS VILLÆ ET PATRONUS ISTIUS ECCLESIÆ QUI OBIIT XVII DIE MENSIS NOVEMBRIS ANNO DOMINI MCCCCXXXIV ET MATILDIS UXOR EJUS QUÆ OBIIT XXVIII DIE MENSIS APRILIS ANNO DOMINI MCCCCXXXVI.

They had only one child, Alice Chaucer, who must have been born about 1404, as she was found to be upwards of thirty years old at her father's death,[4] and thirty-two years of age at her mother's decease in 1436.[5] She married first Sir John Phelip, K.G., who died issueless in 1415:[7] her second husband was Thomas fourth Earl of Salisbury, who died in 1428, without children by her;[8] and about October 1430, she married Wil-

[3] Proceedings of the Privy Council, vol. iv. p. 323.

[4] Esch. 13 Hen. VI. No. 35. *Vide* Note GG.

[5] Esch. 15 Hen. VI. No. 53. *Vide* Note GG.

[6] Their effigies are engraved in Gough's Sepulchral Monuments; and their tomb in Speght's edition of Chaucer, and in Skelton's Antiquities of Oxfordshire.

[7] Esch. 3 Hen. V. n°. 42.

[8] Esch. 7 Hen. VI. n°. 57.

liam de la Pole, Earl of Suffolk,[9] who was created Marquess and Duke of Suffolk, by whom she had three children.[10] She appears to have adopted the Arms of Burghersh, her mother's family, instead of those of Roet or Chaucer.[11] The fate of her last husband, the Duke of Suffolk, who was attainted and beheaded in 1450, is well known.

Their eldest son, John de la Pole, who was created Duke of Suffolk in 1463, and died in 1491, married the Princess Elizabeth Plantagenet, sister of King Edward the Fourth, by whom he had a numerous family, of whom, John de la Pole, the eldest son, was created Earl of Lincoln, *vitâ patris*, and was declared by Richard the Third heir apparent to the Throne, in the event of the death of the Prince of Wales without issue, so that there was strong probability of the great great grandson of the Poet succeeding to the Crown. The Earl of Lincoln was slain at the battle

[9] The settlement made before her marriage with the Earl of Suffolk, dated 12th October, 9th Hen. VI. 1430, is among the Harleian Charters in the British Museum, marked 54 I 9.

[10] See a pedigree of De la Pole in Frost's Notices of Hull, p. 31.

[11] The Seal attached to two Deeds executed by Alice Duchess of Suffolk, one in the 37th of Hen. VI. and the other in the 9th of Edward IV., contains the Arms of De la Pole, impaling a Lion rampant, apparently Burghersh. Charters in the British Museum, 54 I. 16, and 54 I. 18.

of Stoke in 1487, and died without children; and, being attainted, his honours were forfeited. Alice Duchess of Suffolk died on the 20th of May 1475, and was buried at Ewelme, where a splendid tomb was erected to her memory.[12]

Her issue having failed, the descendants of the Poet are presumed to be extinct.

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[12] Engraved in Gough's Sepulchral Monuments, Skelton's History of Oxfordshire, and in Hollis's Monumental Effigies of Great Britain.

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NOTES

NOTES.

NOTE A.

[Referred to p. 10.]

Leland says, Chaucer was of a noble family; Pitts, that he was the son of a Knight; and Hearne, that he was a merchant; while Speght suggests that his father might have been the "Richard Chaucer, Vintner of London," who, in 1349, bequeathed his tenement and tavern to the Church of St. Mary Aldermary. Speght also conjectures that Elizabeth Chaucer, a Nun of St. Helen's, London, was the Poet's sister, or some other relation. (See the Memoir, p. 69) The Will of the said Richard Chaucer, which was dated on Easter Day (12th of April) 1349, and proved in the Hustings Court of the City of London by Simon Chamberlain and Richard Litlebury, on the Feast of St. Margaret the Virgin (20th of July) in the same year, has been lately examined. It appears that he made the abovementioned bequest to the Church of Aldermary, and left other property to pious uses. He mentions only his deceased wife Mary, and her son Thomas Heyroun, and appointed Henry at Strete and Richard Mallyns his executors. Richard Chaucer had however by the said Mary, (or by some other wife) a son, John Chaucer, who was also a Citizen and Vintner of London; for the said Thomas Heyroun, by his Will dated on the 7th of April 1349, and also proved in the Hustings Court, appointed *his brother* [*i.e.* his half brother] John Chaucer, his Executor, and on Monday after the Feast of St. Thomas the Martyr (13th of July) in the same year, John Chaucer, by the description of "Citizen and Vintner, Executor of the Will of my brother Thomas Heyroun," executed a deed relating to some lands. (Records of the Hustings Court, 23 Edw. III.) It is possible that Richard Chaucer may have had other children besides his son John, though they, like John, are not mentioned in his Will.

In the taxation of the 6th Edw. II. 1312-13, in the counties of Cambridge, Huntingdon, Hertford, and Essex, the goods of a Bartholomew le Chaucer were valued at ten shillings, but it does not appear in which of those counties he resided. (Rot. Parl. vol. i. p. 449.) A Gerard le Chaucer was a Burgess of Colchester in the 24th Edw. I. (Ibid. vol. i. pp. 234. 262). A John le Chaucer was a citizen of London in 1299, (Monasticon Anglicanum, vol. iii. p. 326. Rot. Patent. 30 Edw. I. m. 24 d.) and another John Chaucer obtained Letters of Protection, being then in an expedition abroad, on the 12th of June, 12th Edw. III. 1338, (Fœdera, vol. ii. pt. iv. p. 23.) who may have been the John Chaucer, Deputy to the King's Butler in the port of Southampton in February and November, 22 Edw. III. 1348, who seems afterwards to have held the same situation in the Port of London. (Original Writs of Privy Seal in the Rolls House.) In July 1349, a John Chausy received a gratuity for bringing Queen Philippa a black palfrey from the Bishop of Salisbury. (Wardrobe Book, in the Rolls House). In the 29th Edw. I. 1300, a Peter Chaucer was the husband of Isabella, daughter and heiress of Isabella, widow of Roger le Lorimer, late citizen of London. (Ancient Charter in Brit. Mus. 53 H. 2.) A Ralph le Chauser was living in 10 Hen. III. An Elias Chauser lived in the reign of Henry the Third and Edward the First. (Thynne, cited in Speght's Life of Chaucer.) A Nicholas Chaucer was summoned to attend the King's council on the 8th of June 1356. (Rot. Claus. 30 Edw. III. dors. m. 14.)

NOTE B.

[Referred to p. 14.]

Issue Roll of the Exchequer Mich. 42 (Edw. III.) [1368.]

" Die Sabbati vj.to die Novembris (1367).

" Galfrido Chaucer cui dominus Rex xx. marcas annuatim ad scaccarium percipiendas pro bono servitio per ipsum eidem domino Regi impenso per litteras suas patentes nuper concessit. In denariis sibi liberatis in persolutionem *per manus proprios* x. marcarum sibi libe-

randarum de hujusmodi certo suo videlicet de termino sancti Michaelis proximo preterito per breve suum de liberatione de hoc termino. vj.li. xiij.s. iiij.d."

NOTE C.

[Referred to p. 15.]

Issue Roll, Easter 42 Edw. III. (1368.)

" Die Jovis xxv^to^. die Maii (1368).

" Galfrido Chaucere uni vallettorum Cameræ Regis cui dominus Rex xx. marcas annuatim ad scaccarium ad totam vitam suam percipiendas pro bono servitio per ipsum eidem domino Regi impenso vel quousque aliter pro statu suo fuerit provisum per literas suas patentes nuper concessit. In denariis sibi liberatis in persolutionem decem marcarum sibi liberandarum de hujusmodi certo suo, videlicet de termino Pasche proximo preterito per breve suum de liberatione de hoc termino.
vj.li. xiij.s. iiij.d.'

NOTE D.

[Referred to p. 16.]

Issue Roll, Mich. 47 Edw. III. (1373.)

" Die Mercurii xxiv^to^. die Novembris (1372).

" Galfrido Chaucer valletto cui dominus Rex xx. marcas annuatim ad scaccarium ad totam vitam suam percipiendas pro bono servitio per ipsum eidem domino Regi impenso per literas patentes nuper concessit. In denariis sibi liberatis in persolutionem x. marcarum de hujusmodi certo suo videlicet de termino Michaelis proximo preterito per breve suum de liberatione inter mandata de hoc termino. vj.li. xiij.s. iiij.d."

Ibid. " Die Mercurii primo die Decembris (1372).

" Galfrido Chaucer armigero Regis misso in secretis negociis domini Regis versus partes transmarinas de

quibus idem dominus Rex ipsum Galfridum oneravit. In denariis sibi liberatis *per manus proprios* super expensis suis per breve de privato sigillo inter mandata de hoc termino. Unde respondebit. lxvj.li. xiij.s. iiij.d."

NOTE E.

[Referred to p. 16.]

Issue Roll, Mich. 48 Edw. III. (1374.)

" Die Martis xxii. die Novembris (1373).

" Galfrido Chaucer valletto cui dominus Rex viginti marcas annuatim ad scaccarium ad totam vitam suam percipiendas pro bono servitio per ipsum eidem domino Regi impenso per literas suas patentes nuper concessit. In denariis sibi liberatis *per manus proprios* in persolutionem decem marcarum sibi liberandarum de certo suo videlicet de termino Pasche proximo preterito per breve suum de liberatione inter mandata de hoc termino.

vj.li. xiij.s. iiij.d."

Ibid. " Die Sabbati iv. die Februarii (1374).

" Galfrido Chaucer armigero Regis in denariis sibi liberatis *per manus proprios* in persolutionem xxv.li. vj.s. viij.d. sibi debitarum per compotum secum factum ad Scaccarium compotorum, de receptis, vadiis, et expensis per ipsum in servicio Regis factis, profisciendo in negociis Regis versus partes Jannue et Florence in anno xlvii.

xxv.li. vi.s. viij.d."

NOTE F.

[Referred to p. 32.]

EXTRACT FROM THE ACCOUNTS OF THE RECEIVER GENERAL OF JOHN DUKE OF LANCASTER FROM MICHAELMAS 50 EDW. III. 1376, TO MICHAELMAS 5 RIC. II. 1377.

" In denariis solutis Galfrido Chaucer pro annuitate sua sibi debitâ pro termino Michaelis anno l^to. cs., per literas Domini de Warranto datas apud Sauvoye xviij° die Octobris anno l°. [1376.]"

" Pasch. anno li° Galfrido Chaucer pro annuitate sua

pro termino Paschæ, per litteras Domini de warranto datas apud Sauvoye xij° die Junii a° li° [1377] et acquietationem ipsius Galfridi super hunc compotum liberatam—c.s."

NOTE G.

[Referred to p. 33.]

Issue Roll, Mich. 51 Edw. III.

" Die Martis xxiij°. die Dec. (1376).

" Johanni de Burlee militi misso in secretis negociis domini Regis de quibus per ipsum dominum regem extitit oneratus. In denariis sibi liberatis *per manus proprios* in persolutionem, &c. pro vadiis suis xiij.li. vj.s viij.d.

" Galfrido Chaucer armigero Regis misso ex precepto domini Regis in comitiva predicti Johannis in eisdem secretis negociis ipsius domini Regis. In denariis sibi liberatis *per manus proprios* in persolutionem decem marcarum quas dominus Rex sibi liberari mandavit pro vadiis suis. vj.li. xiij.s. iiij.d."

NOTE H.

[Referred to p. 33.]

Issue Roll, Mich. 51 Edw. III.

" Die Martis xvij°. die Februarii (1377).

" Thome de Percy militi misso in nuncium in secretis negociis domini Regis versus partes Flandrie xxxiij.li. vj.s. viij.d.

" Galfrido Chaucer armigero Regis misso in consimilem nuncium versus easdem partes Flandrie. In denariis sibi liberatis *per manus proprios* super expensis suis. x.li."

NOTE I.

[Referred to p. 34]

Issue Roll, Easter 51 Edw. III.

" Die Sabbati xi°. die Aprilis (1377).

" Galfrido Chaucer armigero Regis in denariis sibi liberatis *per manus proprios* in persolutionem xx.li. quas

dominus Rex sibi liberari mandavit de dono suo pro regardo suo causa diversorum viagiorum per ipsum Galfridum factorum eundo ad diversas partes transmarinas ex precepto domini Regis in obsequio ipsius domini Regis per diversas vices. xx.li."

Ibid. " Die Jovis xxx°. die Aprilis (1377).

" Galfrido Chaucer armigero Regis misso in nuncium in secretis negociis domini Regis versus partes Francie. In denariis sibi liberatis *per manus proprios* super vadiis suis. xxvi.li. xiii.s. iiij.d."

NOTE K.

[Referred to p. 36.]

Writ of Privy Seal, 18 April 1 Ric. II. 1378.

" Richard par la grace de Dieu Roy Dengleterre et de France et Seignur Dirlande A lonurable piere en Dieu Levesque de Seint David nostre Chanceller Saluz. Come nostre trescher seignur et ael le Roy qi Dieux assoille eust nadgaires en sa vie grantez de sa grace especiale par ses lettres patentes desouz son grant seal a nostre ame Esquier Geffrey Chaucer un pycher de vyn a prendre chescun jour en port de nostre Citee de Londres par les mains du Botiller de nostre dit seignur et ael ou de ses heirs pur le temps esteant ou du lieutenant de mesme le Botiller a toute la vie de mesme celui Geffrey, Nous en recompensacion du dit picher de vyn par jour et pur le bon service que lavantdit Geffrey nous ad fait et ferra en temps avenir lui eons grantez vynt marcs a prendre chescun an a nostre Escheqer a toute la vie du dit Geffrey as termes de Seint Michel et de Pasque par oveles porcions autre les vynt marcs a lui grantees par nostre dit Seignur et ael par ses lettres patentes desouz son grant Seal par nous confermees, a prendre au dit Escheqer chescun an as ditz termes par oveles porcions. Vous mandons que receves devers vous les dites lettres de nostre dit Seignur et ael faites du dit pycher de vyn par jour et ycelles cancelles en nostre Chancellerie si facez faire sur cest nostre grant noz lettres desouz nostre grant Seal en due forme. Don souz nostre prive Seal a Westm. le xviij. jour D'averill lan de nostre Regne primer."

NOTE L.

[Referred to p. 36.]

Issue Roll, Easter 1 Ric. II. (1378).

" Die Veneris xiiij. die Maii (1378).

" Galfrido Chaucer armigero Regis cui Dominus Rex avus Regis hujus xx marcas annuatim ad scaccarium ad totam vitam suam per literas suas patentes nuper concessit, quas quidem literas dominus Rex nunc confirmavit eidem Galfrido percipiendas dictas xx marcas in forma predicta. In denariis sibi liberatis per assignationem sibi factam in persolutionem xx.li. sibi liberandarum de hujusmodi certo suo videlicet de terminis Michaelis et Paschæ Ao lj°. Regis Edwardi tertii et sancti Michaelis termino proximo preterito per breve de privato sigillo.
xx.li."

" Eidem Galfrido in denariis sibi liberatis *per manus proprios* de prestito super hujusmodi certo suo videlicet de termino Michaelis proximo preterito. xxvi.s. viii.d."

Ibid. " Die Veneris xxviij die Maii. (1378).

" Edwardo de Berkele militi misso in nuncium regis versus partes Lumbardie tam ad dominum de Melan quam ad Johannem Hawkewode pro certis negociis expeditionem guerre regis tangentibus. In denariis per ipsum receptis super vadiis suis. cxxx.li. vj.s. viij.d."

" Galfrido Chaucer misso in comitivâ ejusdem Edwardi ad easdem partes in nuncio regis predicti. In denariis *per ipsum receptis* super vadiis suis, &c.
lxvj.li. xiijs. iiijd."

NOTE M.

[Referred to p. 37.]

Rot. Franc. 1 Ric. II. part ii. m. 6, (1378).

" Galfridus Chauser, qui de licencia Regis versus partes transmarinas profecturus est, habet literas Regis de gene-

rali attornato sub nominibus *Johannis Gower*, et Ricardi Forrester sub alternatione ad lucrandum, &c. in quibuscumque curiis Anglie per unum annum duraturas, &c. Teste Rege apud Westmonasterium xxi°. die Maii. Wilhelmo de Burst' clericus Regis attornato."

NOTE N.

[Referred to p. 40.]

Issue Roll, Mich. 2 Ric. II. (1378-9.)

" Die Jovis tercio die Februarii (1379).

" Galfrido Chaucer cui dominus Rex Edwardus avus Regis hujus xl. marcas annuatim ad scaccarium percipiendas per literas suas, &c. concessit, &c. In denariis sibi liberatis *per manus proprios*, &c. de termino sancti Michaelis ultimo preterito. xii.li. xiii.s. iiij.d."

NOTE O.

[Referred to p. 40.]

Issue Roll, Easter 2 Ric. II. (1379.)

" Die Martis xxiiij^to^. die Maii (1379).

" Galfrido Chaucer cui dominus Rex avus Regis hujus xx. marcas annuatim," &c. " concessit, &c. In denariis sibi liberatis *per assignationem* sibi factam isto die in persolutionem xiii.li. xix.s. viij.d. sibi liberandarum de hujusmodi certo suo, videlicet, tercio die Februarii proximo preterito. xxvi.s. iiij.d."

Eidem Galfrido cui dominus Rex nunc xviij°. die Aprilis anno Regni sui primo xx. marcas annuatim, &c. concessit et in recompensationem unius picheri vini sibi per dominum Regem Edwardum avum Regis hujus in portu Civitatis Londoniæ per manus pincerne ejusdem Regis Edwardi et heredum suorum ad totam vitam ipsius Galfridi quolibet die percipiendas per literas suas patentes nuper concessit. In denariis sibi liberatis *per assignationem* sibi factam isto die in persolutionem xii.li. iiij.d. sibi liberandarum de hujusmodi certo suo, videlicet,

tam pro rata a predicto xviij°. die Aprilis usque festum sancti Michaelis proximum sequentem quam pro termino Pasche proximo preterito. xiii.li. vi.s. iiijd.

NOTE P.

[Referred to p. 40.]

Issue Roll, Mich. 3 Ric. II. (1379.)

" Die Veneris ix°. die Decembris (1379).

" Galfrido Chaucer cui dominus Rex Edwardus xx. marcas annuatim," &c. [ut prius] " concessit. In denariis sibi liberatis in persolutionem x. marcarum, &c. pro termino Michaelis proximo preterito.
vi.li. xiij.s. iiij.d."

Eidem Galfrido cui dominus Rex nunc xx. marcas annuatim," &c. " concessit. In denariis sibi liberatis *per manus proprios* in persolutionem x. marcarum, &c. pro termino Michaelis. vi.li. xiij.s. iiij.d.

NOTE Q.

[Referred to p. 40.]

Issue Roll, Easter 3 Ric. II. (1380.)

" Die Martis 3°. die Julii (1380).

Payment was made to " Galfrido Chaucer" of the annuities due to him (under the grants from Edward the Third and Richard II. for this term, " *per assignationem sibi factam.*" xiij.li. vj.s. viij.d."

NOTE R.

[Referred to p. 40.]

Issue Roll, 4 Ric. II. (1380-1381.)

" Die Mercurii xxviij die Novembris (1380).

" Eidem Galfrido in denariis sibi liberatis *per manus proprios* in persolutionem xiiij. librarum sibi debitarum per compotum secum factum ad scaccarium computorum de receptis vadiis et expensis suis proficiendo in Nuncio Regis ad partes Lumbardie anno primo Regni Ricardi secundi per breve de privato sigillo inter mandata de termino Pasche proximo preterito. xiiij.li."

" Galfrido Chaucer cui dominus Rex Edwardus viginti marcas, &c. annuatim," &c. [ut prius] " concessit. In denariis sibi liberatis *per manus proprios* in persolutionem decem marcarum, &c. pro termino Michaelis proximo preterito, &c. vj.li. xiiis. viijd."

" Eidem Galfrido cui dominus Rex nunc xviii°. die Aprilis anno Regni sui primo viginti marcas annuatim, &c. in recompensationem unius picheri vini concessit, &c. In denariis sibi liberatis *per manus proprios*," &c. " pro termino Michaelis. vj.li. xiii.s. iiij.d."

" Die Mercurii vj die Marcii (1381).

" Galfrido Chaucer armigero Regis. In denariis sibi liberatis *per manus proprios* per assignationem sibi factam isto die in persolutionem xxij.li. quas dominus Rex sibi liberari mandavit de dono suo in recompensationem vadiorum suorum et custuum per ipsum factorum eundo tam tempore regis Edwardi avi Regis hujusmodi in nuncium ejusdem avi versus Moustrell' et Parys in partibus Francie causa tractatus pacis pendentis inter predictum avum et adversarium suum Francie quam tempore domini regis nunc causa locutionis habite de maritagio inter ipsum dominum regem nunc et filiam ejusdem adversarii sui Francie. xxij.li."

NOTE S.

[Referred to p. 42.]

It was first enacted by Stat. 1 Hen. V. c. 1, that Knights of the Shire should be residents within the counties for which they were chosen; and by Stat. 23 Hen. VI. c. 14, it was provided that Knights of the Shire "shall be notable Knights of the same counties for the which they shall be chosen, or otherwise such notable Esquires, gentlemen of birth of the same counties, as shall be able to be Knights; and no man to be such Knight which standeth in the degree of a yeoman and under." The same practice seems, however, to have prevailed for some time, before the accession of Henry the Fifth, as the Writs to Sheriffs always commanded them to return two Knights from their respective counties. See also the Rolls of Parliament, vol. ii. pp. 104, 106, 310 b, 355, 443 b; iii. 601; iv. 8 a, 350, 402. Of the persons elected for counties to the Parliament in which Chaucer represented Kent, no less than forty were actually Knights. The persons who were occasionally chosen as Knights of the Shire in Chaucer's time, are thus described by himself, in his notice of the Franklein. After alluding to the Franklein's luxurious manner of living, he says:—

> "At Sessions ther was he lord and sire.
> Ful often time he was *Knight of the Shire*.
> An anelace and a gipciere all of silk,
> Heng at his girdel, white as morwe milk.
> A Shereve hadde he ben, and a Countour.
> Was no wher swiche a worthy Vavasour."
>
> Prologue to the Canterbury Tales, l. 357-362.

NOTE T.

[Referred to p. 48.]

Lingard adds, however, "we hear not of any frauds discovered, or of defaulters punished, or grievances redressed;" but accusations and dismissals may nevertheless have taken place. That great dissatisfaction existed respecting the conduct of the Officers of Customs is shewn by the Com-

mons having in the 11th Ric. II. 1387-8, petitioned that no Comptroller of the Customs and Subsidies should in future hold his Office for any other term than during good behaviour, and that if any such Officer held his Office for life, under Letters Patent, the said Patent should be revoked, and their estate in their Offices adnulled by Parliament, to which request the Royal assent was given. (Rot. Parl. vol. iii. p. 250.) In August 1389, after Richard had assumed the Government, the Council ordered this enactment to be enforced, and that all appointments of Custumer should in future be made, and the existing Officers confirmed, by the Treasurer and Privy Council. (Proceedings of the Privy Council, vol. i. p. 9.)

NOTE U.

[Referred to p. 51.]

Issue Roll, Mich. 18. Ric. II. (1394).

" Die Jovis x°. die Decembris (1394).

" Galfrido Chaucere cui dominus Rex nunc xxviii° die Februarii proximo preterito viginti libras annuatim ad scaccarium ad totam vitam suam," &c. [ut prius] " In denariis sibi liberatis *per manus proprios* in persolutionem xxxvi.s. vij.d. sibi liberandarum de hujusmodi certo suo, videlicet pro rata a predicto xxviii°. die Februarii usque ultimum diem Martii proximum sequentem.

xxxvi.s. vij.d."

" Eidem Galfrido. In denariis sibi liberatis *per manus proprios* in persolutionem decem librarum sibi liberandarum de hujusmodi certo suo, videlicet pro termino sancti Michaelis proximo preterito. x.li."

Ibid. " Die Jovis primo die Aprilis (1395).

" Galfrido Chaucere cui," &c. [ut prius] " In denariis sibi liberatis *per manus proprios* de prestito super hujusmodi certo suo videlicet pro termino Paschæ proximo futuro x.li. unde respondebit. Postea restituit summam subscriptam ut patet in pelle xxviii° die Maii proximo sequente."

NOTE V.

[Referred to p. 51.]

Issue Roll, Easter 18 Ric. II. (1395).

" Die Veneris xxv^to^. die Junii (1395).

" Galfrido Chaucere cui dominus Rex nunc xx.li. annuatim ad scaccarium ad totam vitam suam ad terminos sancti Michaelis et Pasche per equales portiones recipiendas pro bono servitio per ipsum eidem domino Regi impenso et impendendo per literas suas patentes concessit. In denariis sibi liberatis *per manus proprios* de prestito super hujusmodi certo suo videlicet pro termino sancti Michaelis proximo futuro x.li. unde respondebit."

Ibid. Die Jovis ix^o^. die Septembris (1395).

" Galfrido Chaucer cui dominus Rex nunc xx.li." [ut prius] " In denariis sibi liberatis *per manus proprios* de prestito super certo suo. xxvi.s. viij.d.
Unde respondebit."

NOTE W.

[Referred to p. 51.]

Issue Roll, Mich. 19 Ric. II. (1395-6.)

" Die Sabbati xxvii^o^. die Novembris (1395).

" Galfrido Chaucere cui dominus Rex" [ut prius] " In denariis sibi liberatis *per manus proprios* de prestito super hujusmodi certo suo videlicet pro termino Pasche proximo futuro. viij.li. vj.s. viij.d."

Ibid. " Die Mercurii primo die Marcii (1396).

" Galfrido Chaucere cui dominus Rex nunc viginti libras annuatim ad scaccarium ad totam vitam suam ad terminos sancti Michaelis et Paschæ per equales portiones

percipiendas pro bono servitio per ipsum domino Regi impenso et impendendo per literas suas patentes concessit. In denariis sibi liberatis *per manus proprios* in persolutionem decem librarum sibi liberandarum de hujusmodi certo suo, videlicet, pro termino sancti Michaelis ultimo preterito, deductis vero viiij.li. vj.s. viij.d. sibi liberatis de prestito super hujusmodi certo suo, videlicet, xxvii^{o}. die Novembris ultimo preterito per breve suum de liberate inter mandata de hoc termino. xxxiii.s. iiij.d."

NOTE X.

[Referred to p. 52.]

Issue Roll, Mich. 21 Ric. II. (1397.)

" Die Veneris xxvi^{to}. die Octobris (1397)

" Galfrido Chaucer cui dominus Rex nunc xx. libras annuatim," &c. [ut prius.] " In denariis sib iliberatis *per manus Johannis Walden* per assignationem sibi factam isto die in persolutionem xxx. librarum sibi liberandarum de hujusmodi certo suo, videlicet, pro terminis Michaelis et Paschæ anno vicesimo et termino sancti Michaelis ultimo preterito, deductis vero viginti libris sibi liberatis de prestito super hujusmodi certo suo, videlicet, xxv^{to}. die Decembris ultimo preterito decem libris et secundo die Julij tunc proximo sequente c. solidis et ix^{o}. die Augusti tunc proximo sequente c. solidis. x.li."

NOTE Y.

[Referred to p. 54.]

Issue Roll, Easter 21 Ric. II. (1398).

" Die Lunæ tercio die Junii (1398).

" Galfrido Chaucere cui dominus, &c." [ut prius] " In denariis sibi liberatis *per manus Willielmi Waxcombe* in persolutionem decem librarum sibi liberandarum de hujusmodi certo suo videlicet pro termino Pasche proximo preterito. x.li."

Ibid. " Die Mercurii xxiv. die Julii (1398).

" Galfrido Chaucere cui dominus Rex," &c. [ut prius] " In denariis sibi liberatis *per manus proprios* de prestito super hujusmodi certo suo. vj.s. viij.d."

Ibid. Die Mercurii xxxi. die Julii (1398).

" Galfrido Chaucer cui dominus Rex," &c. [ut prius] " In denariis sibi liberatis *per manus proprios* de prestito super hujusmodi certo suo. vj.s. viij.d."

Ibid. Die Veneris xxiii°. die Augusti (1398).

" Galfrido Chaucer cui," &c. [ut prius] " In denariis sibi liberatis *per manus proprios* de prestito super hujusmodi certo suo. cvj.s. viiij.d."

NOTE Z.

[Referred to p. 54.]

Issue Roll, Mich. 22. Ric. II. (1398).

" Die Lunæ xxviii° die Octobris (1398).

" Galfrido Chaucer cui dominus Rex nunc xx libras" [ut prius] " In denariis sibi liberatis *per manus proprios* de prestito. x.li."

NOTE AA.

[Referred to p. 56.]

Issue Roll, Mich. 1 Hen. IV. (1399—1400).

" Die Sabbati xxj°. die Februarii (1400).

" Galfrido Chaucer cui dominus Ricardus nuper Rex Anglie secundus post conquestum viginti libras annuatim ad scaccarium ad totam vitam suam ad terminos sancti Michaelis et Pasche per equales portiones percipiendas per literas suas patentes concessit quas quidem literas dominus Rex nunc confirmavit una cum arreragiis super

dictam annuitatem debitis usque in confirmationem earundem, In denariis per ipsum receptis de predicto Henrico (Somere) per manus Nicholai Usk thesaurarii Calesiæ in persolutionem decem librarum sibi aretro existentium de hujusmodi certo suo videlicet pro termino sancti Michælis ultimo preterito quas dominus Rex sibi liberari mandavit Habendas de dono suo per breve de privato sigillo inter mandata de hoc termino."

NOTE BB.

[Referred to p. 56.]

Issue Roll, Easter 1 Hen. IV. (1400.)

" Die Sabbati quinto die Junii (1400).

" Galfrido Chaucer armigero cui dominus Ricardus nuper Rex Anglie secundus viginti libras annuatim ad scaccarium ad totam vitam suam percipiendas pro bono servitio per ipsum eidem domino Regi impenso per literas suas patentes nuper concessit, quas quidem literas dominus Rex nunc xxi°. die Octobris proximo preterito confirmavit et ratificavit habendas in forma predicta. In denariis sibi liberatis *per manus Henrici Somere* in partem solutionis viij.li. xiii.s. v.d. sibi liberandarum de hujusmodi certo suo, videlicet, pro rata a predicto xxi°. die Octobris usque ultimum diem Marcii proximum sequentem per breve suum de liberate inter mandata de hoc termino. c.s."

NOTE CC.

[Referred to pp. 60, 66.]

It is remarkable that the name of Sir Payne Roet has not been found in any of the numerous Records that have been examined. All that has been discovered of him is the following statement in Weever's " Ancient Funeral Monuments," p. 413. " In St. Paul's, near unto Sir John Beauchamp's tomb, commonly called Duke Humphrey's, upon a fair marble stone inlaid all over with brass, (of all which nothing but the heads of a few brazen nails are at this day visible) and engraven with the representation and coat arms of the party defunct

thus much of a mangled funeral inscription was of late times perspicuous to be read, as followeth:

'Hic jacet Paganus Roet Miles Guyenne Rex Armorum Pater Catherine Ducisse Lancastriæ.'."

Dugdale, in his History of St. Paul's, (ed. Ellis, p. 10,) merely says, that opposite Sir John Beauchamp's tomb, under a marble stone, lay Pagan Roet, King of Arms in the time of King Edward the Third.

That Katherine Duchess of Lancaster was the daughter of a person called Roet or Roelt of Hainault, is shewn by letters patent granted by her step son King Henry the Fourth, in October 1411, which recites that "divers inheritances in the county of Hainault having descended to our beloved and trusty Knight Sir Thomas Swynford, from the most renowned *Lady Katherine de Roelt*, deceased, late Duchess of Lancaster, his mother, certain persons of those parts doubting that the said Thomas, son and heir of the aforesaid Katherine, was begotten in lawful matrimony, have not, by reason of such doubts, permitted the same Thomas to possess the foresaid inheritance." The patent then proceeds to declare that he was her son and heir, and born in lawful wedlock. Rot. Pat. 13 Hen. IV. p. 1, m. 35; printed in the Fœdera, vol. viii. p. 704, and in the Account of the Swynford Family in the Excerpta Historica, p. 158.

NOTE DD.

[Referred to p. 62.]

EXTRACTS FROM UNPUBLISHED RECORDS RELATING TO *PHILIPPA CHAUCER*.

Issue Roll, Mich. 42 Edw. III. (1368.)

"Die Sabbati xix°. die Februarii (1368).

"Philippæ Chaucer cui dominus Rex decem marcas annuatim ad scaccarium percipiendas pro bono servitio per ipsam Philippam Philippe Regine Anglie impenso per literas suas patentes nuper concessit. In denariis sibi liberatis in persolutionem quinque marcarum sibi

liberandarum de hujusmodi certo suo, videlicet, de termino sancti Michaelis proximo preterito be breve suo de liberate inter mandata de hoc termino.

lxvj.s. viij.d."

Issue Roll, Mich. 43 Edw. III. (1369.)

" Die Mercurii xxii°. die Novembris (1368).

" Philippæ Chaucer cui dominus Rex decem marcas annuatim ad scaccarium ad totam vitam suam percipiendas pro bono servitio per ipsam Philippe Regine Anglie impenso per literas suas patentes nuper concessit. In denariis sibi liberatis in persolutionem quinque marcarum sibi liberatarum de hujusmodi certo suo, videlicet, de termino sancti Michaelis proximo preterito per breve de magno sigillo inter mandata de hoc termino.

lxvj.s. viij.d."

Issue Roll, Easter 4 Ric. II. 1381.)

" Die Veneris xxiv. die Maii (1381).

" Philippæ Chaucer nuper uni domicellarum Philippæ nuper Regine Anglie, cui dominus Rex Edwardus avus Regis hujus x. marcas annuatim ad scaccarium suum percipiendas pro bono servitio per ipsam tam eidem domino Regi quam dicte Regine impenso per literas suas patentes nuper concessit, quas quidem literas dominus Rex nunc confirmavit. In denariis sibi liberatis *per manus predicti Galfridi mariti sui*, in persolutionem v. marcarum sibi liberandarum de hujusmodi certo suo, videlic pro termino Pasche proximo preterito.

iij.li. vi.s. viii.d."

Issue Roll, Easter 10 Ric. II. (1387)

" Die Martis xviii°. die Junii.

" Philippe Chaucer, nuper uni domicellarum Philippe nuper Regine Anglie cui dominus Rex Edwardus avus Regis hujus decem marcas annuatim ad scaccarium, ad totam vitam suam ad terminos sancti Michaelis et Pasche per equales portiones percipiendas pro bono servitio per

ipsam tam eidem domino Regi quam Philippe nuper Regine Anglie impenso per literas suas patentes concessit, quas quidem literas dominus Rex nunc confirmavit. In denariis sibi liberatis *per manus dicti Galfridi* [Chaucer.] lxvj.s. viij.d."

[Referred to p. 64.]

Writ of John Duke of Lancaster to the Clerk of his Wardrobe, dated 2nd January 2 Ric. II. 1380, commanding him to pay (inter alia),

"A Adam Baume pour le poys de cynk hanapes et cynk covercles d'argent surorrez de lui achatez dont un poise xliiij.s. iiij.d. par nous donez en la Veile de la Conception nostre Dame a un Chivaler le Seigneur de Melane, a Sauvoye, et le seconde hanape poise xxxviij.s. x.d. le tierce hanape poise xxxvij.s. viij.d. le quart hanape poise xxxiiijs. viijd. et le quint hanape poise xxxs. vd. les queux quatre hanapes ovesque leur covercles nous donasmes le jour de l'an Renoef a la maitresse notre treschere compaigne, Dame Seuche Blount, Dame Blanche de Trompyngton, et *Phelippe Chaucy*, neof livres sis soldz et unsze deniers. Et au dit Adam pour la fesure et lor des ditz cynk hanapes et cynk covercles pour chescun meindre que le pois est par cynk soldz et issint est la somme allouable oyt livres vynt troys deniers."

Ibid. dated 6 March 4 Ric. II. (1381.)

"Et a Robert Fransois pour deux hanapes ove covercles d'argent et surorrez de lui achatez et par nous donez lun de eux *Philippe Chaucy*, meisme le jour dys livres quatorsze soldz et deux deniers."

Ibid. dated 6 May 5 Ric. II. (1382.)

"A Adam Baume pur le pois ix. hanapes ove covercles d'argent et surorrez des diverses pois de lui achatez et par nous donez," &c. "le jour de l'an Renoef l'an quint" [here follows the names of the persons to whom they were respectively given] "le quint a *Philippe Chaucy*."

NOTE EE.

[Referred to p. 63.]

It is proper to notice the opinion expressed by Tyrwhitt that the title of "Domicella" given to Philippa Pycard proves that she was *unmarried* at the time of her being in the Queen's service, because it applies equally to Philippa Chaucer. The words "Domicellus" and "Domicella" were however descriptive of station and office, and not of bachelorhood or maidenhood. The latter word is strictly synonymous with "Demoiselle,' which "signifie aussi une fille née de parens noble: il se dit aussi bien des femmes mariees que des filles." Dictionnaire de L'Academie. Philippa Pycard was probably the wife of Geoffrey Pycard, to whom the King, in 1370, granted one penny and one bushel of corn a day, for his services to the late Queen.

By a Writ of Privy Seal, dated 10th of March, 43 Edw. III. 1369, Robes were ordered to be delivered for the preceding Christmas, to "Luce atte Wode une des Dames;" to Elizabeth Chaundos, *Philippa Chaucer*, and others, "*Damoiselles*," to Mary Hervy and others, "Souz Damoiselles," and to Johanna de Londres, *Philippa Pykart*, Ellen Proudefot, and others, "Veilleresses de la Chambre nostre tres chere Compaigne la Reine." In the Roll mentioned in the text, the same Veilleresses, though designated by that name, are included among the Sous Damoiselles. The late Queen's Demoiselles to whom pensions were granted on the 20th of January 43 Edw. III. 1370, were Alice de Preston, Matilda Fisher, Johanna Kaulcy, Elizabeth Pershore, each ten marks; Johanna Cosin, Philippa Pycard, Agatha Lyngeyn, each one hundred shillings; and Matilda Radescroft and Agnes Saxilby each five marks. Rot. Pat. 43 Edw. III. p. 2, m. 1.

NOTE FF.

[Referred to p. 66.]

ARMS ON THE TOMB OF THOMAS CHAUCER.

Over the head of the Effigy of Thomas Chaucer is a shield with the Arms of Roet only.

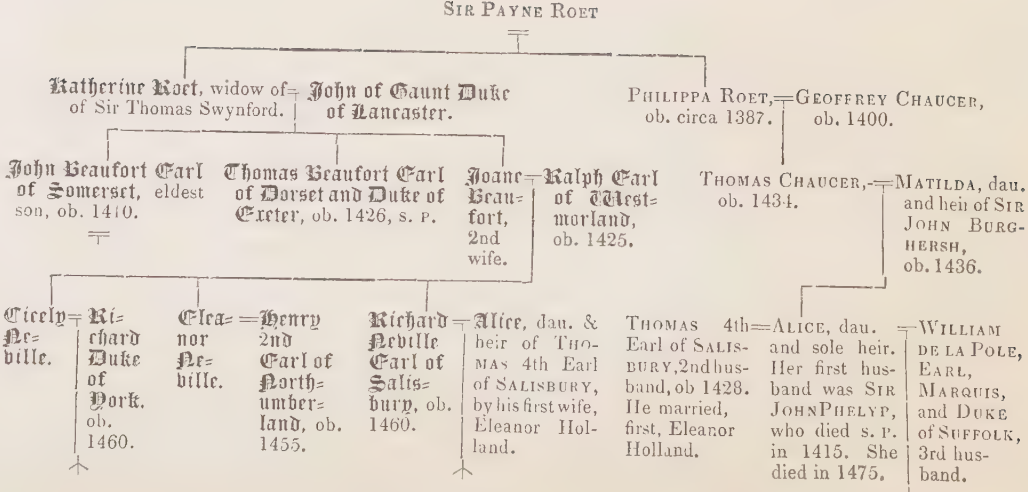
Over the head of the Effigy of his Wife, Matilda, daughter and coheiress of Sir John Burghersh, is a shield with the Arms of Burghersh only.

Below *his* feet, which rest on a *Unicorn couchant*, is a shield containing the Arms of Despencer, impaling Burghersh, shewing an alliance of the Lords Burgherst.

Below *her* feet, which rest on a *Lion couchant*, is a shield containing the Arms of Roet, *quartering* Burghersh, evidently intended for the Arms of Thomas Chaucer and his wife, there being other instances of such a combination of the husband's and wife's Arms, instead of being *impaled* in the usual manner.

In compartments round the Tomb were twenty shields, *ten* of which were indicative of the alliances of Alice, daughter and heiress of Thomas Chaucer, or of different branches of the family of his wife, Maud Burghersh. The other shields were appropriated to the alliance of John Duke of Lancaster *with Katherine Roet, and to their descendants*, as is shown by the accompanying Pedigree. The names in black letter in that Pedigree explain *seven* of the said ten shields. Of the *three* others, *two* were filled with repetitions of the Arms of Thomas Beaufort, and *one* with the Arms of Roet, quartering Burghersh, as in the escutcheon over Thomas Chaucer's effigy.

It would thus appear that *half* of the Armorial decorations were appropriated to the alliances of Thomas Chaucer, or the alliances of his own distinguished relations, and half to those of his Wife and daughter; and (supposing him to have been the son of the Poet by Philippa Roet), some of the persons so commemorated were *his Aunt*, the Duchess of Lancaster; his three *first Cousins*, her children; and *his* three *first Cousins* once removed, her grand children, with their respective Consorts.


Sir Payne Roet
Katherine Roet, widow of Sir Thomas Swynford.
John of Gaunt Duke of Lancaster.
Philippa Roet, ob. circa 1387.
Geoffrey Chaucer, ob. 1400.
John Beaufort Earl of Somerset, eldest son, ob. 1410.
Thomas Beaufort Earl of Dorset and Duke of Exeter, ob. 1426, s. p.
Joane Beaufort, 2nd wife.
Ralph Earl of Westmorland, ob. 1425.
Thomas Chaucer, ob. 1434.
Matilda, dau. and heir of Sir John Burghersh, ob. 1436.
Cicely Neville.
Richard Duke of York, ob. 1460.
Eleanor Neville.
Henry 2nd Earl of Northumberland, ob. 1455.
Richard Neville Earl of Salisbury, ob. 1460.
Alice, dau. & heir of Thomas 4th Earl of Salisbury, by his first wife, Eleanor Holland.
Thomas 4th Earl of Salisbury, 2nd husband, ob 1428. He married, first, Eleanor Holland.
Alice, dau. and sole heir. Her first husband was Sir John Phelyp, who died s. p. in 1415. She died in 1475.
William de la Pole, Earl, Marquis, and Duke of Suffolk, 3rd husband.

NOTE GG.

[Referred to p. 113.]

The Inquisition on the death of THOMAS CHAUCER was taken at Ipswich on the 13th of May 13 Hen. VI. 1435, and the Jury found that he held, conjointly with Matilda his wife, (who in Inquisitions taken in other Counties on his decease, is called the daughter and one of the heirs of Sir John Burghersh, Knight,) the moiety of the Manor of Stratford in the County of Suffolk, and various other lands; that he died on Thursday next before the Feast of St. dmund King and Martyr, 1434, and that Alice Countess of Suffolk was daughter and next heir of the said Thomas Chaucer, and was thirty years and upwards old.

By an Inquisition taken at Oxford, on Thursday next after the Feast of Pentecost, 15 Hen. VI. 1437, on the death of ISABELLA, who was the wife of STEPHEN HAYTFELD, Esq. it was found that she held on the day of her death, conjointly with the said Stephen, the Manor of Nywenham, for term of her life, of the gift and grant of Thomas Dru and Edward Rede, with remainder to THOMAS CHAUCER and his heirs; that the said Thomas Chaucer died on Thursday before the Feast of St. Edmund the Martyr, 13 Henry VI. 1434; that the aforesaid Isabella died on Thursday next after the Feast of the Apostles Philip and James; that Joan the wife of Drew Barantyne, and Elizabeth wife of John Wenlok, were daughters and next heirs of the said Isabella; and that Alice, the wife of William de la Pole Earl of Suffolk, was daughter and next heir of the said Thomas Chaucer, and that she was thirty-two years old and upwards. (Esch. 15 Hen. VI. No. 47.) It is most probable that Thomas Chaucer had purchased the reversion of the said manor of Nywenham.

The Inquisition taken on the death of MATILDA, the widow of THOMAS CHAUCER, shews that she died on Saturday next before the Feast of the Apostles Philip and James in 1436, seized of numerous manors in the counties of Cambridge, Bucks, Lincoln, Suffolk, Essex, Southampton, Berks, Oxford, and Lincoln, and that Alice, the wife of William de la Pole Earl of Suffolk, was her next heir, and then thirty-two years of age.

ADDITIONAL NOTES.

An illustration having been accidentally found of one of the best known passages in the Prologue to the Canterbury Tales, it appears to justify a Note. Chaucer says of the Prioress,—

> " And *French she spake* ful fayre and fetisly,
> *After the scole of Stratford atte Bowe,*
> For French of Paris was to hire unknowe."

Upon which Tyrwhitt remarks, that Chaucer thought but meanly of the French spoken in his time, though it was proper the Prioress should speak some sort of French. It may however be doubted whether Chaucer did not mean that she could not speak French at all; for it seems that, in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, the expression " *French* of Stratford at Bow" was a colloquial paraphrase for *English*. In Ferne's " Blazon of Gentrie," published in 1586, page 202, speaking of the Arms of Pressignie, Paradin says, " The bearer hecrof, ne none of his name be English: but *bycause it is a French Coate* I will give it you in *French blazonne:* Le Seignior de Pressignie, port de azure et de or, un fasse de 6 pieces partie au pee: au chief pale, contrepale, fesse contrefesse, et deux cantons girons, de les mesmes: sur le toute, ou parmy, un escu d'argent. *But if you would blaze in French of Stratford at Bow*, say that Pressignie beareth barrewaies sixe peces, per pale counterchanged in chief, pale of sixe, par fesse transmuted, or and azure, between two cantons gyrons, of the first and second: over all a scutcheon argent."

Chaucer uses a similar expression in " the Milleres Tale," in his description of Absalon:

> " A mery child he was——
> In twenty manere could he trip and dance
> (*After the scole of Oxenford tho*)
> And with his legges casten to and fro."

Evidently meaning that Absalon had never learnt dancing. Chaucer frequently introduces Proverbs into his Pieces, and it is presumed that the allusion to " the school of

Stratford at Bow," and to the " school of Oxford," were both proverbs before his time; and the former certainly was so in the reign of Queen Elizabeth.

The following passage in the Prologue to the " Testament of Love" contains Chaucer's opinion on the imperfect manner in which Englishmen spoke French and Frenchmen English:

" In Latin and French hath many soueraine wits had great delyte to endite, and have many noble things fulfilde, but certes there been some that speaken their poisie mater in French, of which spech the French men haue as good a fantasie as we have in hearing of French mens English. And many termes ther ben in English, which unneath we English men connen declare the knowledginge: How should than a French man borne, soche termes conne iumpere in his matter, but as the Jay chatereth English: right so truly the understanding of Englishmen wol not stretch to the priuie termes in Frenche, what so euer wee bosten of straunge langage. Let then Clerkes enditen in Latin, for they haue the propertie of science, and the knowing in that facultie: and lette Frenchmen in their French also enditen their queint termes, for it is kindely to their mouthes, and let us shewe our fantasies in such wordes as wee learneden of our dames tongue."

Among the " words and phrases not understood," at the end of Tyrwhitt's Glossary, is,

Gattothed, which word occurs twice in the Canterbury Tales; first, in the description of the Wife of Bath in the Prologue:

" *Gat-tothed* was she, sothly for to say;"

and again in the account which the Wife of Bath gives of herself:

" *Gat-tothed* I was, and that became me wele."

Tyrwhitt says, " Whether we read thus, with the generality of the MSS.; or *cat-tothed*, with the MSS. Askew, 1, 2; or *gap-tothed*, with ed. Urry, I confess myself equally unable to explain what is meant by this circumstance of description." The word seems sometimes to have been written *gag-tothed;* for Saunders, in his scandalous

account of Anne Boleyn, says, "She was ill-shaped and ugly; had six fingers; a *gag-tooth*, and a tumour under her chin." "*Gap*-toothed" would seem to indicate teeth which stood at a little distance from each other; but the meaning of a "gag-tooth" has not been ascertained.

AN ESSAY ON THE LANGUAGE AND VERSIFICATION OF CHAUCER

THE CONTENTS.

INTRODUCTION. The different judgments of the Language and Versification of Chaucer stated. Plan of this Essay, in three Parts. 1. To vindicate Chaucer from the charge of having corrupted the English Language by too great a mixture of French with it. 2. To make some observations upon the real state of our language in his time. 3. To apply those observations and others towards illustrating the real nature of his Versification.

PART THE FIRST. § I. The French Language introduced into England before the Conquest; § II. confirmed and propagated by the new establishments at the Conquest; § III. was the ordinary language of the Court; § IV. was carried into the Provinces by the great Barons and military Commanders; § V. and especially by the Clergy; § VI. who, both Secular and Regular, were chiefly foreigners; § VII. The French Language continued to be much used as late as the reign of Edward III. § VIII. Conclusion, that the mixture of French in Chaucer's writings was not owing to any affectation of his, but to the causes abovementioned, which in his time had generally introduced the Norman-Saxon instead of the Saxon Dialect; the same mixture being observable in other contemporary authors.

PART THE SECOND. § I. The proposed observations upon the English Language confined to the actual state

of it in the time of Chaucer. § II. and divided, so as to consider separately the Saxon and Norman parts of it. § III. The Saxon part considered in grammatical order. 1. The Prepositive Article. 2. Nouns substantive and adjective. 3. Pronouns. 4. Verbs and Participles. 5. The indeclinable parts of speech. § IV. The Norman part considered generally, § V. and more particularly with respect to Nouns, substantive and adjective, Verbs, and Participles. § VI. Additional causes of the introduction of a great number of French terms into the English Language.

Part the Third. § I. Preliminary observations upon English Poetry. The form of English Poetry probably borrowed from the Normans, there being no traces of Rime, or Metre, among the Saxons before the Conquest. The Metres and Rime of Modern Poetry derived from the Latin. § II. Progress of English Poetry to the reign of Henry II. Early attempts at riming. § III. Few English Poets known between the reign of Henry II. and that of Henry III. § IV. The *Ormulum* written in verses of fifteen syllables without rime. § V. The number of Rimers increased between the last mentioned period and the time when Chaucer began to write. § VI. State of our Poetry at that time. § VII. Account of the Metres then in use; § VIII. of those used by Chaucer. § IX. The Heroic Metre probably introduced by him, either from France or Italy. § X. A knowledge of the ancient pronunciation of our language necessary in order to form a judgment of the Versification of Chaucer. § XI. How a critic in the age of Augustus would have proceeded in judging of the Metre of Ennius. § XII. The same method recommended with respect to Chaucer. General reasons for believing that he understood and practised the ordinary rules of Metre. § XIII. The offences against Metre, in an English verse, enume-

rated, as arising from 1. a superfluity, 2. a deficiency, of syllables; and 3. a misplacing of Accents. § XIV. No *superfluity* of syllables in Chaucer's verses. § XV. The seeming *deficiencies* in his Metre may generally be supplied by restoring the antient pronunciation of certain syllables, § XVI. and especially of the *e* feminine. Reasons for believing that the final *e* in our antient language was pronounced like the *e* feminine of the French. § XVII. The third kind of irregularity, arising from a *misplacing of accents*, may be rectified, in many instances, by accenting certain words in a manner different from that now in use, and more agreeable to the French practice. Proofs that such a mode of accentuation was used by Chaucer, in words of Saxon as well as of French original. The early poets in France and Italy not exact in the disposition of their accents. § XVIII. Illustration of the foregoing Theory by a Grammatical and Metrical Analysis of the first eighteen lines of the Canterbury Tales.

AN ESSAY ON THE LANGUAGE AND VERSIFICATION OF CHAUCER.

THE Language of Chaucer has undergone two very different judgments. According to one (1), he is the "well of English undefiled;" according to the other (2), he has corrupted and deformed the English

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(1) Spenser, F. Q. b. iv. c. ii. st. 32.

(2) Verstegan, c. 7. "Some few ages after [the Conquest] came the Poet Geffery Chaucer, who writing his poesies in English is of some called the first illuminator of the English tongue. Of their opinion I am not, though I reverence Chaucer as an excellent Poet for his time. He was indeed *a great mingler of English with* FRENCH, unto which language (by like for that he was descended of French, or rather Wallon race) he carried a great affection."

Skinner, Etymol. L. A. Præf. "Ex hoc malesano novitatis pruritu, Belgæ Gallicas voces passim civitate sua donando patrii sermonis puritatem nuper non leviter inquinârunt, et CHAUCERUS poeta, pessimo exemplo, *integris vocum plaustris ex eadem* GALLIA *in nostram linguam invectis*, eam, nimis antea a Normannorum victoria adulteratam, omni fere nativa gratia et nitore spoliavit."

idiom by an immoderate mixture of French words. Nor do the opinions with respect to his Versification seem to have been less discordant. His contemporaries (3), and they who lived nearest to his time universally extol him as the "chief Poete of Britaine," "the flour of Poetes," &c. titles, which must be supposed to imply their admiration of his metrical skill, as well as of his other poetical talents; but the later critics (4), though they leave him in possession of the same sounding titles, yet they are almost unanimously agreed, that he was either totally ignorant or negligent of metrical rules, and that his verses (if they may be so called) are frequently deficient, by a syllable or two of their just measure.

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(3) Lydgate, Occleve, et al. See the Testimonies prefixed to Urry's Edit.

(4) I shall only quote Dryden, Pref. to his Fables. "The verse of Chaucer, I confess, is not harmonious to us;—They who lived with him, and some time after him, thought it musical; and it continues so even in our judgment, if compared with the numbers of Lidgate and Gower, his contemporaries:—'Tis true, I cannot go so far as he, who published the last edition of him [Mr. Speght]; for he would make us believe the fault is in our ears, and that there were really ten syllables in a verse where we find but nine. But this opinion is not worth confuting; 'tis so gross and obvious an error, that com-

It is the purpose of the following Essay to throw some light upon both these questions. Admitting the fact, that the English of Chaucer has a great mixture of French in it, I hope to shew, that this mixture, if a crime, cannot fairly be laid to his charge. I shall then proceed to state some observations upon the most material peculiarities of the Norman-Saxon, or English Language, as it appears to have been in general use in the age of Chaucer; and lastly, applying these observations to the poetical parts of the Canterbury Tales, as they are faithfully printed in this edition from the best Mss. which I could procure, I shall leave it to the intelligent Reader to determine, whether Chaucer was really ignorant of the laws, or even of the graces, of

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mon sense (which is a rule in every thing but matters of Faith and Revelation) must convince the reader, that equality of numbers in every verse which we call *Heroick*, was either not known, or not always practised, in Chaucer's age. It were an easy matter to produce some thousands of his verses, which are lame for want of half a foot, and sometimes a whole one, and which no pronunciation can make otherwise."

This peremptory decision has never since, that I know, been controverted, except by Mr. Urry, whose design of restoring the metre of Chaucer by a collation of Mss. was as laudable, as his execution of it has certainly been unsuccessful.

Versification, and whether he was more negligent of either than the very early Poets in almost all languages are found to have been.

PART THE FIRST.

§ I. In order to judge, in the first place, how far Chaucer ought to be charged as the importer of the many French words and phrases, which are so visible in all his writings, it will be necessary to take a short view of the early introduction and long prevalency of the French language in this country before his time. It might be sufficient, perhaps, for our purpose to begin this view at the Conquest: but I cannot help observing, from a contemporary Historian, that, several years before that great event, the language of France had been introduced into the Court of England, and from thence among the people. The account which Ingulphus gives of this matter is (5), that Edward, commonly

(5) Ingulph. Hist. Croyl. p. 62. ed. Gale. "*Rex autem Edwardus natus in Anglia, sed nutritus in Normannia et diutissime immoratus*, pene in Gallicum transierat, *adducens ac attrahens de Normannia plurimos, quos variis dignitatibus promotos in immensum exaltabat.—Cæpit ergo tota terra sub Rege et sub aliis Normannis*

called the Confessor, having been educated at the court of his uncle Duke Richard II. and having resided in Normandy many years, became *almost a Frenchman*. Upon his return from thence and accession to the throne of England in 1043, he brought over with him a number of Normans, whom he promoted to the highest dignities; and, according to Ingulphus, under the influence of the King and his Norman favourites, the whole nation began to lay aside their English fashions and imitate the manners of the French in many things. In particular, he says expressly, that *all the Nobility in their courts began to speak French, as a great piece of gentility.*

§ II. This fashion however of speaking French, having been adopted only in compliance with the caprice of the reigning prince, would not probably have spread very wide or lasted very long; but at the Revolution, which followed soon after in 1066, the language of the Norman conquerour was interwoven with the new political sys-

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introductis Anglicos ritus dimittere, et Francorum mores in multis imitari, Gallicum [scilicet] idioma omnes Magnates in suis curiis tanquam magnum gentilitium loqui, *chartas et chirographa sua more Francorum conficere, et propriam consuetudinem in his et in aliis multis erubescere.*"

tem (6), and the several establishments, which were made for the support and security of the one, all contributed, in a greater or less degree, to the diffusion and permanency of the other.

§ III. To begin with the court. If we consider that the King himself, the chief officers of state, and by far the greatest part of the nobility, were all Normans, and could probably speak no language but their own, we can have no doubt that French (7) was

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(6) Robert Holkot (as quoted by Selden, *ad Eadmer.* p. 189.) says, that the Conquerour—"*deliberavit quomodo linguam Saxonicam posset destruere, et Angliam et Normanniam in idiomate concordare.*"—But Holkot wrote only in the fourteenth century, and I do not find that the earlier historians impute to the King so silly a project. On the contrary, Ordericus Vitalis, l. iv. p. 520, assures us that William—"*Anglicam locutionem plerumque sategit ediscere: ut sine interprete querelam subjectæ legis posset intelligere, et scita rectitudinis unicuique (prout ratio dictaret) affectuose depromere. Ast a perceptione hujusmodi durior ætas illum compescebat, et tumultus multimodarum occupationum ad alia necessario adtrahebat.*"—And several of his publick instruments, which are still extant in Saxon, [Hickes G. A. S. p. 164.—Præf. p. xv, xvi.] prove that he had no objection to using that language in business; so that it seems more natural to suppose, that the introduction of the French language was a consequence only, and not an object, of his policy.

(7) I apprehend that long before this time the Danish

the ordinary language of the court. The few Saxons, who for some time (8) were admitted there, must have had the strongest induce-

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tongue had ceased to be spoken in Normandy. It was never general there, as appears from a passage of Dudon, l. iii. p. 112. Duke William I. gives this reason for sending his son Richard to be educated at Baieux.—"*Quoniam quidem* Rotomagensis *civitas* Romanâ *potius quam* Daciscâ *utitur eloquentiâ, et* Bajocacensis *fruitur frequentius* Daciscâ *linguâ quam* Romanâ, *volo igitur ut ad* Bajocacensia *deferatur quantocius mœnia*, &c." If we recollect, that the Danish settlers under Rollo were few in comparison with the original inhabitants, and had probably scarce any use of letters among them, we shall not be surprised that they did not preserve their language for above two or three generations.

From two other passages of the same Dudon we learn, that the Danish language, while it lasted in Normandy, was very similar to the Saxon [p. 99.], and yet different from it [p. 100.]; *qualem decet esse sororem*.

(8) After the death of Edwin, and the imprisonment of Morcar in 1070, we do not read of any Saxon Earl, except Waltheof, and he was executed for misprision of treason about three years after. *Orderic. Vit.* l. iv. p. 536. It is singular, that Waltheof, according to the Saxon law, suffered death for the concealment of that treason, for which Roger de Breteuil, Earl of Hereford, being tried *secundum leges Normannorum*, could only be punished by a forfeiture of his inheritance and perpetual imprisonment. *Id.* p. 535. From this time (says Ingulphus, p. 70.) *Comitatus et Baronias, Episcopatus et Prælatias totius terræ suis Normannis Rex distribuit, et vix aliquem Anglicum ad honoris statum vel alicujus dominii principatum ascendere permisit.*

ments to acquire the same language as soon as possible, not merely for the sake of apprehending and answering insignificant questions in the circle, but because in that age affairs of the greatest importance were publickly transacted in the King's court, and there they might be called upon to answer for their possessions, and even for their lives. In an ecclesiastical synod, held in the presence of the King in 1072, the venerable Bishop of Worcester, Wulstan, (whose *holy simplicity*, as the Historian (9) calls it, seems to have preserved him from the degradation which almost all the other English Prelates underwent) was obliged to defend the rights of his see by an interpreter, *a monk* (according to the same (10) Historian) *of very little elo-*

(9) Will. Malmesb. l. iii. p. 118. *Hic sancta simplicitas beati Vulstani*, &c. The story which follows perfectly justifies this character. Matt. Paris, ad an. 1095, says that in another Synod there was a formal design of deposing Wulstan, and that he was saved only by a miracle. He was accused "*simplicitatis et illiteraturæ*;"—"*et quasi homo idiota*, qui linguam Gallicanam non noverat, nec regiis consiliis interesse poterat, *ipso Rege consentiente et hoc dictante, decernitur deponendus.*"

(10) Ibid. *Ita datâ benedictione Monacho, minimæ facundiæ viro, sed Normannicæ linguæ* sciolo, *rem perorans obtinuit.*

quence, but who had a smattering of the Norman *language.*

§ IV. If we consider further, that the great Barons, to whom William (11) distributed a large share of his conquest, when released from their attendance in the King's court, retired to courts of their own, where they in their turn were surrounded by a numerous train of vassals, chiefly their own countrymen, we may be sure that the French language travelled with them into the most distant provinces, and was used by them, not only in their common conversation, but in their civil contracts, their judicial proceedings, and even in the promulgation of their laws (12). The

(11) There is a curious detail of part of this distribution in Ordericus Vitalis, l. iv. p. 521, 2. which concludes thus:—"*aliisque advenis, qui sibi cohaserant, magnos et multos honores contulit; et in tantum quosdam provexit, ut multos in Anglia ditiores et potentiores haberent clientes, quam eorum in Neustria fuerant parentes.*" There is an account in the Monast. Angl. t. i. p. 400. of the Conquerour's giving the whole county of Cumberland to Ranulph de Meschines, and of the division which Ranulph made of it among his relations and followers, who appear to have been all foreigners.

(12) The antient Earls had a power of legislation within their Counties. William of Malmesbury, speaking of William Fitz-Osberne, Earl of Hereford, says; "*Manet in hunc diem in Comitatu ejus apud Herefordum legum quas statuit inconcussa firmitas; ut nullus miles pro*

many Castles, which William built (13) in different parts of the island, must also have contributed very much to the propagation of the French language among the natives, as it is probable that the Foreigners, of whom the garrisons were (14) entirely composed, would insist upon carrying on all their transactions with the neighbouring country in their own language.

§ V. But the great alteration, which, from political motives, was made in the state of the clergy at that time, must have operated perhaps more efficaciously than any other cause

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qualicunque commisso plus septem solidis solvat; cum in aliis provinciis ob parvam occasiunculam in transgressione præcepti heritis, viginti vel viginti quinque pendantur." Lib. iii. p. 105.

(13) Ordericus Vitalis, l. iv. p. 511. observes, that before the conquest, "*Munitiones, quas Castella Galli nuncupant, Anglicis provinciis paucissimæ fuerant: et ob hoc Angli, licet bellicosi fuerint et audaces, ad resistendum tamen inimicis extiterant debiliores.*" William, at his landing, placed garrisons at *Pevensey* and *Hastings*. After the battle, he took possession of *Dover*, and left a garrison there. He caused *firmamenta quædam*" to be made at *London*, and built a strong citadel at *Winchester*. Upon his return from Normandy, after the first insurrection of the English, he built a castle within the city of *Exeter;* another at *Warwick;* and another at *Nottingham*. In the city of *York*, "*munitionem firmavit, quam delectis militibus custodiendam tradidit.*" At *Lincoln*,

to give the French language a deep root in England. The Conquerour seems to have been fully apprized of the strength which the new government might derive from a Clergy more closely attached to himself by a community of interests than the native English were likely to be. Accordingly, from the very beginning of his reign, all ecclesiastical preferments, as fast as they became vacant, were given to his Norman chaplains; and, not content toavail himself of the ordinary course of succession, he contrived (15), upon various charges of real or pretended irregularities, to

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Huntingdon, and *Cambridge*, "*castra locavit, et tutelam eorum fortissimis viris commendavit.*" He had also garrisons at *Montacute* in Somersetshire, and at *Shrewsbury*. He built fortifications at *Chester* and *Stafford*. We read also of castles at *Arundel* and *Stutesbury* at this time; and *Norwich* was so strong as to stand a siege of three months. *Ord. Vit.* p. 500—535.

(14) Orderic. Vital. l. iv. p. 506. *Custodes in castellis strenuos viros* ex Gallis *collocavit, et opulenta beneficia, pro quibus labores et pericula libenter tolerarent, distribuit.*

(15) See the transactions of the Council held at *Winchester*, in the year 1070, ap. Flor. Vigorn. p. 636. Having spoken of the degradation of Stigand, Archbishop of Canterbury, and Agelmar, Bishop of the East Saxons, he proceeds thus: *Abbates etiam aliqui ibi degradati sunt, operam dante rege ut quamplures ex Anglis suo honore privarentur*, in quorum locum suæ gentis personas subrogavit, ob confirmationem sui (quod noviter acquisierat)

remove several of the English Bishops and Abbots, whose places were in like manner immediately supplied by Foreigners. In short, in the space of a very few years, all the Sees of England were filled with Normans, or strangers naturalized, if I may so say, in Normandy, and the greatest part of the Abbeys in the kingdom were under governours of the same description.

§ VI. It must be allowed, that the confessed

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regni. *Hic et nonnullos, tam episcopos quam Abbates,* quos nulla evidenti causa nec concilia nec leges seculi damnabant, *suis honoribus privavit, et usque ad finem vitæ custodiæ mancipatos detinuit, suspicione, ut diximus, tantum inductus novi regni.*

In confirmation of what is said here and in the text, if we examine the subscriptions to an Ecclesiastical Constitution in 1072, ap. Will. Malm. l. iii. p. 117. we find that the two Archbishops, seven Bishops out of eleven, and six Abbots out of twelve, were Foreigners: and in about five years more the four other Bishopricks, and five at least of the other six Abbeys, were in the hands of Foreigners.

Another Ecclesiastical Constitution made at this time has very much the appearance of a political regulation. It orders "that the Bishops' seats shall be removed from towns to cities;" and in consequence of it the See of Lichfield was removed to Chester; that of Selesey to Chichester; that of Elmham to Thetford, and afterwards to Norwich; that of Shireburne to Salisbury, and that of Dorchester to Lincoln. *Will. Malm.* l. iii. p. 118. When the King had got a set of Bishops to his mind, he would wish to have them placed where their influence could be of most service to him.

superiority (16) in literature of the Norman clergy over the English at that time furnished the King with a specious pretext for these promotions; and it is probable, that the Prelates, who were thus promoted, made use of the same pretext to justify themselves in disposing of all their best benefices among their friends and countrymen. That this was their constant practice is certain. Nor were the new Abbotsless industrious to stock their convents (17) with Foreigners, whom they invited

(16) Ordericus Vitalis, l. iv. p. 518. says, that the Normans at the Conquest found the English "*agrestes et pene illiteratos;*" and he imputes, with some probability, the decay of learning among them, from the time of Beda and others, to the continual ravages and oppressions of the Danes. See also William of Malmesbury, l. iii. p. 101, 2. It may be observed too, from Continuat. Hist. Croyland, by Peter of Blois, p. 114. that the first regular lectures (of which we have any account) at Cambridge were read there by four foreign Monks, who had come over into England with Jeffrey, Abbot of Croyland, formerly Prior of St. Evroul. They are said to haveread "*diversis in locis a se divisi et formam Aurelianensis studii secuti,*" three of them in Grammar, Logick, and Rhetorick, and the fourth in Theology.

(17) See the preceding note. There was no great harmony at first between the English monks and their new governours. See the proceedings at Glastonbury under Thurstin [Will. Malm. l. iii. p. 110], and at Canterbury against Wido. [Chron. Saxon. p. 179, 180. ed. Gibson.]

over from the continent, partly perhaps for the pleasure of their society, and partly (as we may suppose) in expectation of their support against the cabals of the English monks. And when the great Barons, following the royal example, applied themselves to make their peace witht he Church by giving her a share of their plunder, it was their usual custom to begin their religious establishments with a colony (18) from some Norman Monastery.

§ VII. In this state of things, which seems

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(18) The Conquerour had put Goisbert, a Monk of Marmontier, at the head of his new foundation of Battle Abbey. *Ord. Vital.* l. iv. p. 505. In like manner Roger de Montgomery, Earl of Shrewsbury, sent for Monks from Sées to begin his Abbey at Shrewsbury. *Id.* l. v. p. 581. Walter Espec also brought over Monks of Clervaulx to fill his two Abbeys, of Rivaulx and Wardun. *Ailr. Rievall. ap. X Script. p.* 338.

Beside these and many other independent foundations, which were in this manner opened for the reception of foreign Monks in preference to the natives, a considerable number of Religious Houses were built and endowed, as cells to different monasteries abroad; and as such were constantly filled by detachments from the superiour society. They are frequently mentioned in our histories under the general name of the *Alien Priories*; and though several of them, upon various pretexts, had withdrawn themselves from their foreign connexions and been made denizens, no less than one hundred and forty remained in 1414, which were then all suppressed and their revenues vested in the crown. See the List. Monast. Angl. v. i. p. 1035.

to have continued (19) with little variation to the time of Edward III. it is probable, that

(19) I suppose that, during this whole period of above 250 years, the English language was continually gaining ground, by slow and almost imperceptible degrees, in proportion nearly as the English natives were emerging from that state of depression in which they were placed by the Conquest. We have no reason to believe that much progress was made in either of these matters before the reign of King John. The loss of Normandy, &c. in that reign, and the consequent regulations of Henry III. and Louis IX. by which the subjects of either crown were made incapable of holding lands in the dominions of the other [Matth. Paris, ad an. 1244,] must have greatly diminished the usual conflux of Normans to the English court; and the intestine commotions in this country under John and Henry III. in which so many of the greater Barons lost their lives and estates, must eventually have opened a way for the English to raise themselves to honours and possessions, to which they had very rarely before been admitted to aspire.

In the year 1258, the 42 Henry III. we have a particular instance (the first, I believe, of the kind) of attention on the side of government to the English part of the community. The Letters Patent, which the King was advised to publish in support of the Oxford Provisions, were sent to each County in Latin, French, and English. [Annal. Burton, p. 416. One of them has been printed from the Patent-roll, 43 H. III. n. 40. m. 15. by Somner in his Dict. Sax. v. Unnan, and by Hearne, Text. Roff. p. 391.] At the same time all the proceedings in the business of the Provisions appear to have been carried on in French, and the principal persons in both parties are evidently of foreign extraction.

If a conjecture may be allowed in a matter so little

the French and English languages subsisted together throughout the kingdom; the higher

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capable of proof, I should think it probable, that the necessity, which the great Barons were under at this time, of engaging the body of the people to support them in their opposition to a new set of foreigners, chiefly Poitevins, contributed very much to abolish the invidious distinctions which had long subsisted between the French and English parts of the nation. In the early times after the Conquest, if we may believe Henry of Huntingdon [L. vi. p. 370.] "to be called an Englishman was a reproach:" but when the Clares, the Bohuns, the Bigods, &c. were raising armies for the expulsion of Foreigners out of the kingdom, they would not probably be unwilling to have themselves considered as natives of England. Accordingly Matthew Paris [p. 833.] calls Hugh Bigod (a brother of the Earl Marshall) *virum de terra Anglorum naturalem et ingenuum;* and in another passage [p. 851.] he appropriates the title of "*alienigenæ*" to those foreigners, "*qui Reginæ attinentes per eam introducti fuerant in Angliam:* and so perhaps the word ought generally to be understood in the transactions of that reign. None but persons born out of England were then esteemed as Foreigners.

About the same time we find an Archbishop of York objecting to Clerks (recommended to benefices by the Pope], because they were "ignorant of the English language" [Mat. Par. p. 831.]; which seems to imply, that a knowledge of that language was then considered among the proper qualifications of an Ecclesiastick: but that it was not necessarily required, even in the Parochial Clergy, appears from the great number of foreign Parsons, Vicars, &c. who had the King's Letters of protection in the 25th year of Edward I. See the Lists in Prynne, t. i. p. 709—720.

orders, both of the Clergy and Laity (20), speaking almost universally French, the lower

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(20) The testimony of Robert of Gloucester (who lived in the times of H. III. and E. I.) is so full and precise to this point, that I trust the Reader will not be displeased to see it in his own words, or rather in the words of that very incorrect Ms. which Hearne has religiously followed in his edition.

Rob. Glouc. p. 364.

Thus come lo! Engelond into Normannes honde.
And the Normans ne couthe speke tho *bote her owe*[a] speche,
And speke Frenche as *dude atom*,[b] and here chyldren dude al so teche.
So that hey men of thys lond, that of her blod come,
Holdeth alle thulke speche, that hii of hem nome.
Vor bote[c] a man couthe French, *me tolth* of hym wel *lute*;[d]
Ac[e] lowe men holdeth to Englyss and to her *kunde* speche *yute*[f].
Ich wene ther ne be man in world contreyes none,
That ne holdeth to her kunde speche, bote Engelond one.
Ac wel me wot vor to conne bothe wel yt ys,
Vor the more that a man con, the more worth he ys.

I shall throw together here a few miscellaneous facts in conformation of this general testimony of Robert of Gloucester.

A letter of Hugh, Bishop of Coventry, preserved by Hoveden [p. 704.] assures us, that William, Bishop of Ely, Chancellor and Prime Minister to Richard I. "*linguam Anglicanam prorsus ignorabat.*"

In the reign of Henry III. Robert of Gloucester, in-

[a] *But their own.*
[b] *Did at home.*
[c] *For but*——
[d] *Men told.*—*lite*, little.
[e] *But*, *kinde* natural.
[f] *Yet.*

retaining the use of their native tongue, but also frequently adding to it a knowledge of the other. The general inducements which the English had to acquire the French language have been touched upon above; to

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tending, as it should seem, to give the very words of Peter, Bishop of Hereford (whom he has just called "a Freinss bishop)," makes him speak thus.—"*Par Crist*," he sede, "*Sir Tomas, tu is maveis. Mcint ben te ay fet.*" Rob. Glouc. p. 537.

There is a more pleasant instance of the familiar use of the French language by a bishop, as late as the time of Edward II. Louis, consecrated Bishop of Durham in 1318, was unfortunately very illiterate—"laicus; Latinum non intelligens, sed cum difficultate pronuncians. Unde, cum in consecratione suâ profiteri debuit, quamvis per multos dies ante instructorem habuisset, legere nescivit: et cum, auriculantibus [f. articulantibus] aliis, cum difficultate ad illud verbum *metropoliticæ* pervenisset, et diu anhelans pronunciare non posset, dixit in Gallico; *Scit pur dite.*—Et cum similiter celebraret ordines, nec illud verbum *in ænigmate* proferre posset, dixit circumstantibus; *Par Seint Lowys, il ne fu pas curteis, qui ceste parole ici escrit.*" Hist. Dunelm. ap. Wharton, Ang. Sac. t. i. p. 761.

The transactions at Norham, in 1291, the 20 Edw. I. with respect to the Scottish succession, appear to have been almost wholly carried on in French, for which it is difficult to account but by supposing that language to have been the language of the Court in both nations. See the Roll de Superior. Reg. Angl. in Prynne, t. i. p. 487, et seq. Edward's claim of the Superiority is first made by Sir Roger Brabanson *Sermone Gallico;* and af-

which must be added, that the children, who were put to learn Latin, were under a necessity of learning French at the same time, as it was the constant practice in all schools, from the Conquest (21) till about the reign of Edward

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terwards the Bishop of Bath and Wells, and the King himself, speak to the assembly of English and Scots in the same language. Ibid. p. 499. 501.

The answers of the Bishop of Durham to the Pope's Nuncioes *in Gallico* [Walt. Hemingf. ad an. 1295.] may be supposed to have been out of complaisance to the Cardinals, (though, by the way, they do not appear to have been Frenchmen;) but no such construction can be put upon the following fact related by Matthew of Westminster [ad an. 1301. p. 438.] The Archbishop of Canterbury informs the Pope, that he had presented his Holiness's letters to the King in a full court "*quas ipse dominus rex reverenter recipiens, eas publice legi coram omnibus*, et in Gallicâ linguâ fecerat patenter exponi."

(21) Ingulphus, a contemporary writer, informs us that this practice began at the Conquest. p. 71. "*Ipsum etiam idioma* [Anglicum] *tantum abhorrebant* [Normanni], *quod leges terræ statutaque Anglicorum regum linguâ Gallicâ tracturentur;* et pueris etiam in scholis principia literarum grammatica Gallice ac non Anglice traderentur; *modus etiam scribendi Anglicus omitteretur, et modus Gallicus in chartis et in libris omnibus admitteretur.*"— And Trevisa, the translator and augmenter of Higden's Polychronicon in the reign of Richard II. gives us a very particular account of its beginning to be disused within his own memory. The two passages of Higden and Trevisa throw so much light upon the subject of our present enquiry, that I shall insert them both at length, from Ms.

III. to make the scholars construe their Latin lessons into French. From the discontinuance of this practice, as well as from other causes, the use and, probably, the knowledge

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Harl. 1900. as being more correct in several places than the Ms. from which Dr. Hickes formerly printed them in his Præf. ad Thes. Ling. Septent. p. xvii.

Higden's *Polychron.* b. i. c. lix. This apayringe of the birthe tonge is by cause of tweye thinges: oon is for children in scole, azenes the usage and maner of alle other naciouns, beth compelled for to leve her owne langage, and for to constrewe her lessouns and her thingis a Frensche, and haveth siththe that the Normans come first into England. Also gentil mennes children beth ytauzt for to speke Frensche, from the tyme that thei beth rokked in her cradel, and kunneth speke and playe with a childes brooche. And uplondish men wole likne hem self to gentil men, and fondeth with grete bisynesse for to speke Frensche, for to be the more ytold of.

Trevisa. This maner was myche yused to fore the first moreyn, and is siththe som del ychaungide. For John Cornwaile, a maistre of grammar, chaungide the lore in grammer scole and construction of Frensch into Englisch, and Richard Pencriche lerned that maner teching of him, and other men of Pencriche. So that now, the zere of oure lord a thousand thre hundred foure score and fyve, of the secunde king Rychard after the Conquest nyne, in alle the gramer scoles of Englond children leveth Frensch, and construeth and lerneth an Englisch, and haveth therby avauntage in oon side and desavauntage in another. Her avauntage is, that thei lerneth her grammer in lasse tyme than children were wont to do. Desavauntage is, that now children of grammer scole kunneth no more Frensch than can her lifte heele. And

of French, as a separate language, received a considerable check. In the 36th year of Edward III. a law (22) was made, "that all pleas, in the courts of the King or of any other Lord,

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that is harm for hem, and thei schul passe the see and travaile in strange londes, and in many other places also. Also gentel men haveth now mych ylefte for to teche her children Frensch.

(22) This celebrated statute is said by Walsingham, [p. 179.] to have been made "*ad petitionem Communitatis;*" but no such petition appears upon the Parliament-roll: and it seems rather to have been an Act of Grace, moving from the King, who on the same day entered into the fiftieth year of his age; "*unde in suo Jubileo populo suo se exhibuit gratiosum.*" Walsing. ibid. It is remarkable too, that the cause of summons at the beginning of this Parliament was declared by Sir Henry Greene, Chief Justice, *en Engleis* (says the Record for the first time): and the same Entry is repeated in the Records of the Parliaments 37 and 38 Edw. III. but not in those of 40 Edw. III. or of any later Parliament; either because the custom of opening the cause of summons in French was restored again after that short interval, or, perhaps, because the new practice of opening it in English was so well established, in the opinion of the Clerk, as not to need being marked by a special Entry.

The reasons assigned in the preamble to this Statute, for having Pleas and Judgments in the English tongue, might all have been urged, with at least equal force, for having the Laws themselves in that language. But the times were not yet ripe for that innovation. The English scale was clearly beginning to preponderate, but the slowness of its motion proves that it had a weight to overcome.

shall be pleaded and judged in the English tongue," and the preamble recites, "*that the French tongue* (in which they had been usually pleaded, &c.) *was too much unknown*," or disused; and yet, for near threescore years after this (23) the proceedings in Parliament, with very few exceptions, appear to have been all in French, and the statutes continued to be published in the same language, for above one hundred and twenty years, till the first of Richard III.

§ VIII. From what has been said I think

(23) All the Parliamentary proceedings in English before 1422, the first of Henry VI. are the few which follow.

The confession of Thomas Duke of Gloucester, taken at Calais by William Rickhill and recorded in Parliament, *inter Plac. Coron.* 21 Ric. II. n. 9. It is printed in Tyrrell, v. iii. p. 793.

Some passages in the Deposition of Richard II. printed at the end of Knighton, int. X Scriptores.

The ordinance between William Lord the Roos and Robert Tirwhitt, Justice of the King's Bench. 13 Hen. IV. n. 13.

A Petition of the Commons with the King's answer. 2 Hen. V. n. 22.

A Proviso in English inserted into a French grant of a Disme and Quinzisme, 9 Hen. V. n. 10.

At the beginning of the reign of Henry VI. the two languages seem to have been used indifferently. The Subsidy of Wolle, &c. was granted in English. 1 Hen. VI. n. 19. A Proviso in French was added by the

we may fairly conclude, that the English language must have imbibed a strong tincture of the French, long before the age of Chaucer, and consequently that he ought not to be charged as the importer of words and phrases, which he only used after the example of his predecessors and in common with his contemporaries. This was the real fact, and is capable of being demonstrated to any one, who will take the trouble of comparing the writings of Chaucer with those of Robert of Gloucester (24) and Robert of Brunne, who

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Commons to the Articles for the Council of Regency, which are in English. Ibid. n. 33. Even the Royal Assent was given to Bills in English. 2 Hen. VI. and n. 54. Be it ordeined as it is asked. Be it as it is axed. —and again, n. 55.

I have stated this matter so particularly, in order to shew, that when the French language ceased to be generally understood, it was gradually disused in Parliamentary proceedings; and from thence, I think, we may fairly infer, that while it was used in those proceedings, constantly and exclusively of the English, it must have been very generally understood.

(24) Robert of Gloucester's Chronicle has been published by Hearne, Oxf. 1724, faithfully, I dare say, but from incorrect Mss. The author speaks of himself [p. 560.] as living at the time of the Battle of Evesham in 1265; and from another passage [p. 224.] he seems to have lived beyond the year 1278, though his history ends in 1270. See Hearne's Pref. p. lxviii.

Robert Manning of Brunne, or Bourn, in Lincolnshire,

both lived before him, and with those of Sir John Mandeville and Wicliff, who lived at the same time with him. If we could for a moment suppose the contrary; if we could suppose that the English idiom, in the age of Chaucer, remained pure and unmixed, as it was spoken in the courts of Alfred or Egbert, and that the French was still a foreign, or at least a separate language; I would ask, whether it is credible, that a Poet, writing in English upon the most familiar subjects, would stuff his compositions with French words and

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translated into English rimes, from the French of Robert Grosseteste, Bishop of Lincoln, a treatise called "*Manuel de Pechés*," as early as the year 1303. This work of his has never been printed, but is preserved among the Harleian Mss. n. 1701. and the Bodleian, n. 2323. He also translated from the French a history of England; the first part, or *Gesta Britonum*, from Master Wace; the remainder, to the death of Edward I. from Peter of Langtoft. His translation was finished in 1338. The latter part, with some extracts from the former, was printed by Hearne in 1725, from a single Ms.

Sir John Mandeville's account of his Travels was written in 1356. In the last edition, Lond. 1727, the text is said to have been formed from a collation of several Mss. and seems to be tolerably correct.

Wicliff died in 1384. His translation of the New Testament was printed for the first time by Lewis, Lond. 1731. There is an immense Catalogue of other works, either really his or ascribed to him, still extant in Ms. See his Life by Lewis; and Tanner, Bibl. Brit.

phrases, which, upon the above supposition must have been unintelligible to the greatest part of his readers; or, if he had been so very absurd, is it conceivable, that he should have immediately become, not only the most admired, but also the most popular writer of his time and country?

PART THE SECOND.

Having thus endeavoured to shew, in opposition to the ill-grounded censures of Verstegan and Skinner, that the corruption, or improvement, of the English language by a mixture of French was not originally owing to Chaucer, I shall proceed, in the second part of this Essay, to make some observations upon the most material peculiarities of that Norman-Saxon dialect, which I suppose to have prevailed in the age of Chaucer, and which, in substance, remains to this day the language of England.

§ I. By what means the French tongue was first introduced and propagated in this island has been sufficiently explained above; but to ascertain with any exactness the degrees, by which it insinuated itself and was ingrafted into the Saxon, would be a much

more difficult task (25), for want of a regular series of the writings of approved authors transmitted to us by authentic copies. Luckily for us, as our concern is solely with that period when the incorporation of the two languages was completed, it is of no great importance to determine the precise time at which any word or phrase became naturalized; and for the same reason, we have no need to enquire minutely, with respect to the other alterations, which the Saxon language in its several stages appears to have undergone, how far they proceeded from the natural mutability of human speech, especially among an unlearned people, and how far

(25) In order to trace with exactness the progress of any language, it seems necessary, 1. that we should have before us a continued series of authors; 2. that those authors should have been approved, as having written, at least, with purity; and 3. that their writings should have been correctly copied. In the English language, we have scarce any authors within the first century after the Conquest; of those, who wrote before Chaucer, and whose writings have been preserved, we have no testimony of approbation from their contemporaries or successors; and lastly, the Copies of their works, which we have received, are in general so full of inaccuracies, as to make it often very difficult for us to be assured, that we are in possession of the genuine words of the Author.

they were owing to a successive conflux of Danish and Norman invaders.

§ II. The following observations therefore will chiefly refer to the state, in which the English language appears to have been about the time of Chaucer, and they will naturally divide themselves into two parts. The first will consider the remains of the antient Saxon mass, however defaced or disguised by various accidents; the second will endeavour to point out the nature and effects of the accessions, which, in the course of near three centuries, it had received from Normandy.

§ III. For the sake of method it will be convenient to go through the several parts of speech in the order, in which they are commonly ranged by Grammarians.

1. The Prepositive Article ꝥe, ꝥeo, ꝥaꝛ, (which answered to the ὁ, ἡ, τo, of the Greeks, in all its varieties of gender, case, and number,) had been long laid aside, and instead of it an indeclinable *the* was prefixed to all sorts of nouns, in all cases, and in both numbers.

2. The Declensions of the Nouns Substantive were reduced from six to one; and instead of a variety of cases in both numbers, they had only a Genitive case singular, which was uniformly deduced from the Nominative

by adding to it *es;* or only *s,* if it ended in an *e* feminine; and that same form was used to express the Plural number (26) in all its cases: as, Nom. *Shour,* Gen. *Shoures,* Plur. *Shoures.* Nom. *Name,* Gen. *Names,* Plur. *Names.*

The Nouns Adjective had lost all distinction of Gender, Case, or Number.

3. The Primitive Pronouns retained one oblique case (27) in each number: as, *Ic,* or *I; We:* Obl. *Me; Us:—Thou; Ye:* Obl.

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(26) It is scarce necessary to take notice of a few Plurals, which were expressed differently, though their number was greater in the time of Chaucer than it is now. Some of them seem to retain their termination in *en* from the second Declension of the Saxons; as, oxen, eyen, hosen, &c. Others seem to have adopted it *cuphoniæ gratiâ;* as, brethren, eyren, instead of, bꝛoðꝛu, æȝꝛu. And a few seem to have been always irregularly declined; as, men, wimmen, mice, lice, feet, &c. See Hickes, Gr. A. S. p. 11, 12.

(27) I take no notice here of the Genitive cases, *min, thin, oure, youre,* &c. as being at this time hardly ever distinguishable from Pronouns Possessive. How are we to know whether *min boke* should be rendered *liber mei,* or *liber meus?* In the Plural number however, in a few instances, the Genitive case seems to have retained its proper power. C. T. v. 825. oure aller cok—would be more naturally translated—*nostrúm* omnium gallus, than *noster* omnium. And so in P. P. fol. cxi. Youre aller hele—*vestrúm* omnium salus; not, *vestra.*

Thee; You.—He, She; Hi (28), or *They:* Obl. *Him, Hire; Hem,* or *Them.*

Their Possessives were in the same state with the Adjectives; *Min, Thin, His, Hire; Oure, Youre, Hir,* or *Their* (29).

The Interrogative and Relative *Who* had a Genitive and Accusative case, *Whos,* and *Whom,* but no variety of Number.

On the contrary, the Demonstrative, *This,* and *That,* had a Plural expression, *Thise,* and *Tho,* but no variety of case.

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(28) It is very difficult to say from whence, or why, the Pronouns, *They, Them,* and *Their,* were introduced into our language. The Saxon Pronouns, *Hi, Hem,* and *Hir,* seem to have been in constant use in the time of Robert of Gloucester. Sir John Mandeville and Chaucer use *They,* for *Hi;* but never, as I remember, (in the Mss. of authority) *Them,* or *Their.*

(29) The four last of these Possessive Pronouns were sometimes expressed a little differently, viz. *Hires, Oures, Youres,* and *Hirs,* or *Theirs;* as they are still, when the Noun to which they belong is understood, or when they are placed after it in a sentence. To the question, Whose book is this? we answer, *Hers, Ours, Yours,* or *Theirs:* or we declare; This book is *Hers, Ours,* &c. I can hardly conceive that the final *s* in these words is a mark of the Possessive (or Genitive) case, as a very able writer [Short Introduction to English Grammar, p. 35, 6.] seems to be inclined to think; because in the instances just mentioned, and in all which I have been able to find or to imagine, I cannot discover the least trace of the

The other words, which are often, though improperly, placed in the class of Pronouns, were all become undeclined, like the Adjectives; except, *Eyther*, alteruter; *Neyther*, neuter; *Other*, alter; which had a Genitive case Singular, *Eytheres, Neytheres, Otheres: Other*, alius, had a Genitive case singular, and a Plural number, *Otheres;* and *Aller* (a corruption of ealna) was still in use, as the Genitive Plural of *Alle* (30).

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usual powers of the Genitive case. The learned Wallis [Gram. Angl. c. 7.] has explained the use of these Pronouns without attempting to account for their form. He only adds; "Nonnulli, *hern*, *ourn*, *yourn*, *hisn*, dicunt, pro *hers*, *ours*, &c. sed barbarè, nec quisquam (credo) sic scribere solet." If it could be proved that these words were antiently terminated in *n*, we might be led to conjecture that they were originally abbreviations of *her own*, *our own*, &c. the *n* being afterwards softened into *s*, as it has been in many other words.

(30) It may be proper here to take a little notice of the Pronoun, or Pronominal Adjective, *Self*, which our best Grammarians, from Wallis downwards, have attempted to metamorphose into a Substantive. In the Saxon language, it is certain that *Sylf* was declined like other Adjectives, and was joined in construction with Pronouns Personal and Substantives, just as *ipse* is in Latin. They said, Ic sylf, Ego ipse; Min sylfes, mei ipsius; Me sylfne, me ipsum, &c. Petrus sylf, Petrus ipse, &c. [See Hickes, Gr. A. S. p. 26.] In the age of Chaucer, *Self*, like other Adjectives, was become undeclined. Though he writes *Self*, *Selve*, and *Selven*, those

4. The Verbs, at the time of which we are treating, were very nearly reduced to the simple state in which they are at present.

They had four Modes, as now; the Indicative, the Imperative, the Subjunctive, and the Infinitive; and only two expressions of Time, the Present and the Past. All the other varieties of Mode and Time were expressed by Auxiliary Verbs.

In the Inflexions of their Verbs, they dif-

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varieties do not denote any distinction of case or number; for he uses indifferently, *himself* and *himselven*; *hemself* and *hemselven*. He joins it with Substantives, in the sense of *ipse*, as the Saxons did. [See v. 2862.] In that *selve* grove. In illo ipso nemore. v. 4535. Thy *selve* neighebour. Ipse tuus vicinus. But his great departure from the antient usage was with respect to the Pronouns Personal prefixed to *Self*. Instead of declining them through the cases which they still retained, he uses constantly, Myself, for, I self, and, Me self; Thyself, for, Thou self, and, Thee self; Him self and Hire self, for, He self and She self; and in the Plural number, Our self, for, We self, and Us self; Your self, for, Ye self, and You self; and Hem self, for They self.

It would be vain to attempt to defend this practice of Chaucer upon any principles of reason or grammatical analogy. All that can be said for it is, that perhaps any regular practice was preferable to the confusion and uncertainty which seems to have prevailed before. Accordingly, the writers who succeeded him following his example, it became a rule, as I conceive, of the English language, that Personal Pronouns prefixed to *Self* were

fered very little from us, in the Singular number: *I love, Thou lovest, He loveth:* but in the Plural they were not agreed among themselves; some (31) adhering to the Old Saxon form; *We loveth, Ye loveth, They loveth;* and others adopting, what seems to have been, the Teutonic; *We loven, Ye loven, They loven.* In the Plural of the Past Tense the latter form prevailed universally: I loved, thou

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only used in one case in each number; viz. those of the First and Second Person in the Genitive case, according to the Saxon form, and those of the Third in the Accusative.

By degrees a custom was introduced of annexing *Self* to Pronouns in the Singular number only, and *Selves* (a corruption, I suppose, of *Selven*) to those in the Plural. This probably contributed to persuade our late Grammarians that *Self* was a Substantive; as the true English Adjective does not vary in the Plural number. Another cause of their mistake might be, that they considered, *my, thy, our, your*, to which *self* is usually joined, as Pronouns *Possessive;* whereas I think it more probable that they were the Saxon Genitive cases of the *Personal* Pronouns. The metaphysical Substantive *Self*, of which our more modern Philosophers and Poets have made so much use, was unknown, I believe, in the time of Chaucer.

(31) In the long quotation from Trevisa (which see above, n. 21.) it may be observed, that all his Plural Verbs of the present Tense terminate in *eth;* whereas in Sir John Mandeville and Chaucer they terminate almost as constantly in *en.*

lovedst, he loved; *We loveden, Ye loveden, They loveden.*

The second person Plural in the Imperative Mode regularly terminated in *eth;* as, *Loveth* ye (32); though the final consonants, according to the genius of the language, were frequently omitted, especially in verse.

The Saxon termination of the Infinitive in *an* had been long changed into *en; to loven, to liven,* &c. and they were beginning to drop the *n; to love, to live.*

The Participle of the Present Time began to be generally terminated in *ing;* as, *loving;* though the old form, which terminated in *ende,* or *ande,* was still in use; as, *lovende,* or *lovande.* The Participle of the Past time continued to be formed, as the Past time itself was, in *ed;* as, *loved;* or in some contraction of *ed* (33); except among the irregu-

(32) Maud. p. 281. And at certeyn houres—thei seyn to certeyn officeres—*Maketh pees* (i. e. Make ye silence). And than sein the Officeres, *Now pees! lysteneth* (i. e. listen ye).—In the following page, *Stondeth,* is used for, *Stand ye;* and *Putteth,* for, *Put ye.*

(33) The methods, by which the final *ed* of the Past Tense and its Participle was contracted or abbreviated, in the age of Chaucer, were chiefly the following:

1. By throwing away the *d.*

This method took place in Verbs, whose last Consonant was *t,* preceded by a Consonant. Thus *caste, coste,*

lar Verbs (34), where for the most part it terminated in *en*; as, *bounden, founden.*

The greatest part of the Auxiliary Verbs were only in use in the Present and Past Tenses of their Indicative and Subjunctive Modes. They were inflected in those tenses like other Verbs, and were prefixed to the

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hurte, putte, slitte, were used instead of, *casted, costed, hurted, putted, slitted.*

2. By transposing the *d*.

This was very generally done in Verbs, whose last Consonant was *d*, preceded by a Vowel. Thus, instead of, *reded, leded, spreded, bleded, feded*, it was usual to write, *redde, ledde, spredde, bledde, fedde.*—And this same method of transposition, I apprehend, was originally applied to shorten those words which we now contract by Syncope; as *lov'd, liv'd, smil'd, hear'd, fear'd*, which were antiently written, *lovde, livde, smilde, herde, ferde.*

3. By transposing the *d* and changing it into *t*.

This method was used 1. in Verbs, whose last Consonant was *t*, preceded by a Vowel. Thus, *leted, sweted, meted*, were changed into, *lette, swette, mette.*—2. in Verbs, whose last Consonant was *d* preceded by a Consonant. Thus, *bended, bilded, girded*, were changed into, *bente, bilte, girte.*—And generally, in Verbs, in which *d* is changed into *t*, I conceive that *d* was first transposed; so that *dwelled, passed, dremed, feled, keped*, should be supposed to have been first changed into, *dwellde, passde, dremde, felde, kepde*, and then into, *dwelte, paste, dremte, felte, kepte.*

4. The last method, together with a change of the radical vowel, will account for the analogy of a species

Infinitive Mode of the Verb to which they were Auxiliary. I *shall* loven; I *will*, or *woll*, loven; I *may*, or *mow*, loven; I *can*, or *con*, loven, &c. We *shullen* loven; We *willen*, or *wollen*, loven; We *mowen* loven; We *connen* loven, &c. In the Past tense, I (35) *shulde* loven; I *wolde* loven; I *mighte*, or

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of Verbs, generally reputed anomalous, which form their Past Time and its Participle, according to modern orthography, in *ght*. The process seems to have been thus. *Bring, bringed, brongde, brogde, brogte; Think, thinked, thonkde, thokde, thokte; Teche, teched, tachde, tachte*, &c. Only *fought*, from *fighted*, seems to have been formed by throwing away the *d* (according to method 1.) and changing the radical Vowel. See instances of similar contractions in the Francic language. Hickes, Gramm. Fr. Th. p. 66.

(34) I consider those Verbs only as irregular, in which the Past Time and its Participle differ from each other. Their varieties are too numerous to be particularly examined here; but I believe there are scarce any, in which the deviations from the regular form will not appear to have been made by some method of contraction, or abbreviation, similar to those which have been pointed out in the last note among the Regular Verbs. The common termination of the Participle in *en* is clearly a substitution for *ed*, probably for the sake of a more agreeable sound; and it is often shortened, as *ed* has been shewn to be, by transposition. Thus, *drawen, knowen, boren, stolen*, were changed into *drawne, knowne, borne, stolne*.

(35) *Shulde* and *Wolde* are contracted from *Shulled*,

moughte loven; I *coude* loven, &c. We *shulden*, we *wolden*, we *mighten*, or *moughten*, we *couden* loven, &c.

The Auxiliary *To Haven* was a complete Verb, and, being prefixed to the Participle of the Past time, was used to express the Preterperfect and Preterpluperfect Tenses. I *have* loved, Thou *havest*, or *hast* loved, He *haveth*, or *hath* loved; We *haven*, or *han* loved, &c. I *hadde* (36) loved, thou *haddest* loved, he *hadde* loved; We, ye, they, *hadden* loved.

The Auxiliary *To ben* was also a complete Verb, and being prefixed to the Participle of the Past time, with the help of the other Auxiliary Verbs, supplied the place of the whole Passive voice, for which the Saxon language had no other form of expression. I

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and *Wolled*, by transposing the *d*, according to method 2.

Mighte and *Moughte* are formed from *maghed* and *moghed*, according to method 3. *Maghed*, *maghde*, *maghte*; *Moghed*, *moghde*, *moghte*.

Coude is from *conned*, by transposition of the *d*, and softening the *n* into *u*. It is often written *couthe*, and always so, I believe, when it is used as a Participle. In the same manner Bishop Douglas, and other Scottish writers, use *Begouth* as the Præterit of *Begin*. *Begonned*, *begonde*, *begoude*, *begouthe*.

(36) *Hadde* is contracted from *Haved*, as *made* is from *maked*. See Hickes, Gram. Fr. Th. p. 66.

am, thou *art*, he *is* loved; We, ye, they, *aren*, or *ben* loved. I *was*, thou *wast*, he *was* loved; We, ye, they *weren* loved(37).

5. With respect to the indeclinable parts of Speech, it will be sufficient to observe here, that many of them still remained pure Saxon: the greatest number had undergone a slight change of a letter or two: and the more considerable alterations, by which some had been disfigured, were fairly deducible from that propensity to abbreviation, for which the inhabitants of this island have been long remarkable, though perhaps not more justly so than their neighbours.

§ IV. Such was, in general, the state of

(37) The Verb *To do* is considered by Wallis, and other later Grammarians, as an Auxiliary Verb. It is so used, though very rarely, by Chaucer. [See v. 14742, 4.] He more commonly uses it transitively: [v. 10074. Do stripen me. *Faites me depouiller.*—v. 10075. Do me drenche. *Faites me noyer.*] but still more frequently to save the repetition of a verb. [v. 269.

> His eyen twinkeled in his hed aright,
> As DON the sterres in a frosty night.]

Dr. Hickes has taken notice that *do* was used in this last manner by the Saxons: [Gr. A. S. p. 77.] and so was *faire* by the French, and indeed is still. It must be confessed, that the exact power, which *do*, as an auxiliary, now has in our language, is not easy to be defined, and still less to be accounted for from analogy.

the Saxon part of the English language when Chaucer began to write: let us now take a short view of the accessions, which it may be supposed to have received at different times from Normandy.

As the language of our Ancestors was complete in all its parts, and had served them for the purposes of discourse, and even of composition in various kinds, long before they had any intimate acquaintance with their French neighbours, they had no call from necessity, and consequently no sufficient inducement, to alter its original and radical constitutions, or even its customary forms. Accordingly, we have just seen, that, in all the essential parts of Speech, the characteristical features of the Saxon idiom were always preserved: and we shall see presently, that the crowds of French words, which from time to time were imported, were themselves made subject, either immediately or by degrees, to the laws of that same idiom.

§ V. The words, which were thus imported, were chiefly Nouns Substantive, Adjectives, Verbs, and Participles. The Adverbs, which are derived from French Adjectives, seem to have been formed from them after they were Anglicised, as they have all the Saxon termi-

nation *lich* or *ly* (38), instead of the French *ment*. As to the other indeclinable parts of speech, our language, being sufficiently rich in its own stores, has borrowed nothing from France, except perhaps an interjection or two.

The Nouns Substantive in the French language (as in all the other languages derived from the Latin) had lost their Cases long before the time of which we are treating; but such of them as are naturalized here, seem all to have acquired a Genitive case, according to the corrupted Saxon form, which has been stated above. Their Plural number was also new modelled to the same form, if necessary; for in the Nouns ending in *e* feminine, as the greater part of the French did, the two languages were already agreed. Nom. *Flour*. Gen. *Floures*. Plur. *Floures*. Nom. *Dame*. Gen. *Dames*. Plur. *Dames*.

On the contrary, the Adjectives, which at home had a distinction of Gender and Number, upon their naturalization here, seem to have been generally stript of both, and re-

(38) As *rarely*, *continually*, *verily*, *bravely*, &c. which correspond to the French adverbs, rarement, continuellement, veraiment, bravement, &c.

duced to the simple state of the English Adjective, without Case, Gender, or Number.

The French Verbs were obliged to lay aside all their differences of Conjugation. *Accorder, souffrir, recevoir, descendre,* were regularly changed into—*accorden, suffren, receiven, descenden.* They brought with them only two Tenses, the Present and the Past; nor did they retain any singularity of Inflexion, which could distinguish them from other Verbs of Saxon growth.

The Participle indeed of the Present time, in some Verbs, appears to have still preserved its original French form; as, *usant, suffisant,* &c.

The Participle of the Past time adopted, almost universally, the regular Saxon termination in *ed*; as *accorded, suffred, received, descended.* It even frequently assumed the prepositive Particle ȝe, (or y, as it was latterly written,) which, among the Saxons, was very generally, though not peculiarly, prefixed to that Participle.

§ VI. Upon the whole, I believe it may be said with truth, that, at the time which we are considering, though the form of our Language was still Saxon, the matter was in a great measure French. The novelties of all kinds, which the Revolution in 1066 had introduced,

demanded a large supply of new terms; and our Ancestors very naturally took what they wanted, from the Language which was already familiar to a considerable part of the Community. Our Poets in particular, who have generally the principal share in modelling a Language, found it their interest to borrow as many words as they conveniently could from France. As they were for a long time chiefly Translators, this expedient saved them the trouble of hunting for correspondent terms in Saxon. The French words too, being the remains of a polished language, were smoother and slid easier into metre than the Saxon, which had never undergone any regular cultivation: their final syllables chimed together with more frequent consonancies, and their Accents were better adapted to Riming Poetry. But more of this in the next Part.

PART THE THIRD.

Before we proceed in the third and last part of this Essay, in which we are to consider the Versification of Chaucer, it may be useful to premise a few observations upon the state of English Poetry antecedent to his time.

§ I. That the Saxons had a species of writing, which differed from their common prose, and was considered by themselves as Poetry (39), is very certain; but it seems equally certain, that their compositions of that kind were neither divided into verses of a determinate number of syllables, nor embellished with what we call Rime (40). There

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(39) The account which Beda has given of Cædmon [Eccl. Hist. l. iv. c. 24.] is sufficient to prove this. He repeatedly calls the compositions of Cædmon *carmina—poemata*—and in one place, *versus:* which words in the Saxon translations are rendered, Leoþ,—Leoþ ꝑonȝeꝛ, or ꝑonȝeꝛ—and ꝼeꝛꝛ: and *ars canendi* is translated, Leoþ cꝛæꝼt or ꝑanȝ cꝛæꝼt.

Asser also, in his Life of Alfred, speaks of *Saxonica poemata* and *Saxonica carmina* [p. 16. 43.] and most probably the *Cantilenæ per successiones temporum detritæ*, which Malmesbury cites in his History, l. ii. p. 52. were in the Saxon language. The same writer [l. v. de Pontif. edit. Gale.] mentions a *Carmen triviale* of Aldhelm (the author of the Latin Poem *de Virginitate*, who died in 709,) as *adhuc vulgo cantitatum;* and he quotes the testimony of King Alfred, in his *Liber manualis*, or *Hand-boc*, as saying, "that no one was ever equal to Aldhelm in English Poetry."

(40) Both these circumstances are evident from the most cursory view of the several specimens of Saxon Poetry, which Hickes has exhibited in his Gram. Ang. Sax. c. xxi. and they are allowed by that learned writer himself. Unwilling however, as it should seem, to leave his favourite language without some system of

are no traces, I believe, to be found of either Rime or Metre in our language, till some

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versification, he supposes, that the Saxons observed the quantity of syllables in their verses, "though perhaps," he adds, "not so strictly as the Heroic Greek and Latin poets."

He gives three reasons for this supposition. 1. Because they did not use Rime. 2. Because they transposed their words in such an unnatural manner. "Hoc autem cur facerent Anglo-Saxonum Poetæ, nulla, ut videtur, alia assignari causa potest, quam quæ, ut idem facerent, Græcos et Latinos poetas coegit; nempe Metri Lex." 3. Because they had a great number of dissyllable and polysyllable words, which were fit for metrical feet.

However specious these reasons may appear, they are certainly far from conclusive, even if we had no monuments of Saxon Poetry remaining; but in the present case, I apprehend, the only satisfactory proof would have been to have produced, out of the great heap of Poetical compositions in the Saxon language, some regular metrical verses; that is, some portions of words, similar to each other in the nature and order of their component syllables, and occurring either in a continued series, or at stated intervals. If all external proofs of the nature of the Roman Poetry were lost, a few verses of Virgil or Horace would be sufficient to convince us, that their metres were regulated by the quantity of syllables; and if Cædmon had really written in a metre regulated by the quantity of syllables, a few of his lines must have afforded us the same conviction with respect to the general laws of his versification.

For my own part, I confess myself unable to discover any material distinction of the Saxon Poetry from Prose,

years after the Conquest; so that I should apprehend we must have been obliged for both

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except a greater pomp of diction, and a more stately kind of march.

Our ancestors affected a certain pomp of style in all their compositions. Angli (says Malmesbury, l. i. p. 13.) *pompatice* dictare amant. And this affectation, I suspect, was the true cause of their so frequently inverting the natural order of their words, especially in Poetry. The obscurity arising from these inversions had the appearance of Pomp. That they were not owing to the constraint of any metrical Laws (as Hickes supposes) may be presumed from their being commonly used in Prose, and even in Latin Prose, by Saxon writers. Ethelwerd, an Historian descended in the fifth degree from King Ethelred [inter Script. post Bedam, p. 831—850.], is full of them. The following passage of his history, if literally translated, would read very like Saxon Poetry. "Abstrahuntur tunc | ferventes fide | anno in eodem | Hirbernia stirpe | tres viri lecti: | furtim consuunt lembum | taurinis byrsis; | alimentum sibi | hebdomadarium supplent; | elevant dies | per vela septem totidemque noctes, &c."

We do not see any marks of studied alliteration in the old Saxon Poetry; so that we might attribute the introduction of that practice to the Danes, if we were certain, that it made a part of the Scaldic versification at the time of the Danish settlements in England.

However that may have been, Giraldus Cambrensis [Descr. Camb. p. 889.] speaks of *Annomination*, which he describes to be what we call *Alliteration*, as the favourite rhetorical figure of both the Welsh and English in his time. "Adeo igitur hoc verborum ornatu duæ nationes, Angli scil. et Cambri, in omni sermone

to the Normans, who very early (41) distinguished themselves by poetical performances in their Vulgar tongue.

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exquisito utuntur, ut nihil ab his eleganter dictum, nullum nisi rude et agreste censeatur eloquium, si non schematis hujus limâ plene fuerit expolitum." It is plain that Alliteration must have had very powerful charms for the ears of our ancestors, as we find that the Saxon Poetry, by the help of this embellishment alone, even after it had laid aside its pompous phraseology, was able to maintain itself, without Rime or Metre, for several centuries. See Dr. Percy's Essay on the Metre of Pierce Plowman's Visions. Rel. of antient Poetry, vol. ii.

(41) I cannot find that the French antiquaries have been able to produce any Poetry, in any of the dialects of their language, of an earlier date than the Conquest of England, or indeed than the beginning of the XIIth century. However we read of a Thibaud de Vernun, Canon of Rouen, who, before the year 1053, "multorum gesta Sanctorum, sed et S^ti^ Wandregesili, a suâ latinitate transtulit, atque in communis linguæ usum satis facunde refudit, ac sic, *ad quamdam tinnuli rythmi similitudinem, urbanas ex illis cantilenas edidit.* [De Mirac. S^ti^ Vulframni. Auctore Monacho Fontanell. temp. Will. I. ap. Dacherii Acta SS. Ord. Ben. t. iii. p. 379.] It is probable too, that the "*vulgares cantus*," which, according to Raimond de Agiles [Gesta Dei, p. 180.], were composed against Arnoulph, a Chaplain of the Duke of Normandy, in the first Croisade, were in the French language; and there can be little doubt that William IX. Duke of Aquitain, upon his return from Jerusalem in 1101, made use of his native tongue, when

The Metres which they used, and which we seem to have borrowed from them, were plainly copied from the Latin (42) rythmical verses, which, in the declension of that lan-

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"*miserias captivitatis suæ, ut erat jocundus et lepidus, multotiens retulit rythmicis versibus cum facetis modulationibus.*" Ord. Vital. l. x. p. 793. The History of the taking of Jerusalem, which is said to have been written by the Chevalier Gregoire Bechada, of Tours in Limoges, "*materná linguá, rythmo vulgari, ut populus pleniter intelligeret,*" [Labbe, Bibl. Nov. t. ii. p. 296.] has not been brought to light; so that probably the oldest French poem of any length now extant is a translation of the *Bestiarius* by Philippe de Thaun, it being addressed to Aliz (Adeliza of Louvain) the second Queen of our Henry I.

There is a copy of this Poem among the *Cotton* Mss. Nero. A. v. The authors of the *Histoire Littéraire de la France*, t. ix. p. 173—90. suppose it to have been written about 1125, that is, thirty years before *Le Brut*, which Fauchet had placed at the head of his list of French Poems.

I shall take occasion in another place to shew, that the real author of *Le Brut* was Wace (the same who wrote the *Roman de Rou*,) and not Wistace, as Fauchet calls him.

(42) The Latin Rythmical verses resemble the Metrical in the number of syllables only, without any regard to quantity. "Arma cano virumque qui primus Trojæ ab oris" would pass for a very good Rythmical Hexameter. The greatest part however of these compositions were in imitation of the Iambic and Trochaic metres; and in them, if the Accents fell luckily, the un-

guage, were current in various forms among those, who either did not understand, or did not regard, the true quantity of syllables; and the practice of Riming (43) is probably to be

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learned ear would often be as well pleased as if the laws of Quantity were observed. The two Rythmical Hymns quoted by Beda [De Metris, edit. Putsch. p. 2380.] are sufficient to prove this. The first, he observes, "*ad instar Iambici metri pulcherrime factus est.*"

O rex æterne Domine
Rerum creator omnium, &c.

The other is "*ad formam metri Trochaici.*"

Apparebit repentina dies magna Domini
Fur obscurâ velut nocte improvisos occupans.

In the former of these Hymns, "*Domine*," to a modern ear at least, sounds as well as "*nomine;*" and in the latter, "*dies*" and "*velut*," being accented upon their first Syllables, affect us no otherwise than "*dices*" and "*velum*" would have done.

From such Latin Rythms, and chiefly those of the Iambic form, the present Poetical measures of all the nations of Roman Europe are clearly derived. Instead of long and short Syllables, the Feet of our Poetry are composed of Syllables accented and unaccented, or rather of Syllables strongly and less strongly accented; and hence it is, that we have so little variety of Feet, and consequently of Metres; because the possible combinations of Syllables accented and unaccented are, from the nature of speech, much more limited in point of number, than the combinations of long and short Syllables were in the Greek and Latin languages.

(43) We see evident marks of a fondness for Rime in the Hymns of S. Ambrosius and S. Damasus, as early

deduced from the same original, as we find that practice to have prevailed in Ecclesiastical Hymns, and other compositions, in Latin, some centuries before Otfrid of Weissenberg, the first known Rimer in any of the vulgar European dialects.

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as the fourth Century. One of the Hymns of Damasus, which begins,

> "Martyris ecce dies Agathæ
> Virginis emicat eximiæ," &c.

is regularly rimed throughout. Prudentius, who had a more classical taste, seems studiously to have avoided Rimes; but Sedulius and Fortunatus, in the fifth and sixth Centuries, use them frequently in their Hymns. See their works, and a Hymn of the latter ap. Fabric. Bib. Med. Ætat. v. FORTUNATUS.

The learned Muratori, in his Dissertation *de Rythmicâ Veterum Poesi*, [Antiq. Med. Ævi, Dissert. xl.] has collected together a vast heap of examples, which prove that Rimes were very generally used in Hymns, Sequences, and other religious compositions in Latin, in the VIIth, VIIIth, and IXth Centuries; so that for my own part I think it as probable, that the Poets in the vulgar languages (who first appeared about the IXth Century) borrowed their Rimes from the Latin Poetry of that age, as it is evident that they did the forms of their versification.

Otfrid of Weissenberg, the earliest Rimer that is known in any of the modern Languages, about the year 870, calls Rime, in the style of the Latin Grammarians, *Schema omœoteleuton* [Præf. ad. Liutbert. ap. Schilter. Thes. Antiq. Teuton, t. i. p. 11.] And when the Monk,

§ II. I wish it were in my power to give a regular history of the progress which our Ancestors made in this new style of versification; but (44), except a few lines in the Saxon Chronicle upon the death of William the Conquerour, which seem to have been

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who has been cited in n. 41. says, that Thibaud de Vernun composed his Songs "*ad quamdam tinnuli rythmi similitudinem*," he must mean, I think, that he composed them "in imitation of (Latin) jingling Rythm." I say, *Latin*, or at least some *foreign*, Rythm, because otherwise he would rather have said *in rythmo tinnulo*. The addition of the epithet *tinnulus* seems to shew plainly enough, that *Rythmus* alone did not then signify what we call *Rime*.

(44) William of Malmesbury (de Gest. Pont. Angl. l. iii. p. 271.) has preserved two Riming verses of Aldred, Archbishop of York, which that Prelate threw out against one Ursc, Sheriff of Worcestershire, not long after the Conquest. "Hatest thou Ursc—Have thou God's curse." "*Vocaris Ursus—Habeas Dei maledictionem.*" Malmesbury says, that he inserts this English, "*quod Latina verba non sicut Anglica concinnitati respondent.*" The Concinnity, I suppose, must have consisted in the Rime, and would hardly have been thought worth repeating, if Rime in English had not then been a novelty.

The lines in the Saxon Chronicle, to which I mean to refer, are in p. 191. ed. Gibs. The passage begins,

Eartelar he let pyncean.
ȝeapme men rpiðe rpencean—

All the lines are not in Rime; but I shall set down a

intended for verses of the Modern fashion, and a short Canticle, which, according to Matthew Paris (45), the blessed Virgin was pleased to dictate to Godric, an Hermite near Durham, I have not been able to discover

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few, in English characters, which I think could not have chimed together so exactly by mere accident.

Thet he nam be rihte
And mid mycelan un-rihte
Of his leode
For littelre neode—
He sætte mycel deor-frith,
And he lægde laga ther with—
He forbead tha heortas,
Swylce eac tha baras;
Swa swithe he lufode tha hea-deor
Swylce he wære heora fæder.
Eac he sætte be tham haran,
That hi mosten freo faran—

The concluding lines are,

Se æl-mihtiga God
Kithe his saule mild-heortnisse
And do him his synna forgifenesse.

The writer of this part of the Chronicle (as he tells us himself, p. 189.) had *seen* the Conquerour.

(45) Hist. Angl. p. 100. Godric died in 1170, so that, according to tradition, the Canticle was prior to that period. The first Stanza being incorrectly printed, I shall only transcribe the last.—

Seinte Marie, Christes bur,
Meidenes clenhad, moderes flur,
Dilie mine sennen, rixe in min mod,
Bringe me to winne with selfe God—

any attempts at Riming Poetry, which can with probability be referred to an earlier period than the reign of Henry the Second. In that reign Layamon (46), a Priest of Ernleye, near Severn, as he calls himself,

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Hoc Canticum (says M. P.) *potest hoc modo in Latinum transferri.*

Sancta Maria, Christi thalamus,
virginalis puritas, matris flos,
dele mea crimina, regna in mente meâ,
duc me ad fælicitatem cum solo Deo.

Upon the authority of this translation I have altered *pinne* (as it is in the print) to *winne*. The Saxon p is often mistaken for a p.

(46) This work of Layamon is extant among the Cotton Mss. Cal. A. ix. A much later copy, in which the author, by a natural corruption, was called *Lawcman*, was destroyed by the fire. There is an account of both copies in Wanley's Cat. Mss. Septent. p. 228. and p. 237.

The following short extract from fol. 7, 8. containing an account of the Sirens, which Brutus met with in his voyage, will serve to support what is said in the text of this Author's intermixing Rimes with his prose.

Ther heo funden the Merminnen,
That beoth deor of muchele ginnen.
Wismen hit thunchet ful iwis,
Bineothe thon gurdle hit thunceth fisc,
Theos habbeth swa murie song,
Ne beo tha dai na swa long,
Ne bith na man weri
Heora songes to heran—

translated (chiefly) from the French of Wace (47) a fabulous history of the Britons, entitled "Le Brut," which Wace himself, about the year 1155, had translated from the Latin of Geffrey of Monmouth. Though the greatest part of this work of Layamon resemble the old Saxon Poetry, without Rime or

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(47) The French Clerk, whom Layamon professes to have followed in his history, is called by Wanley [Cat. Mss. Sept. p. 228) *Wate;* as if poor *Maistre Wace* were doomed to have his name perpetually mistaken. Fauchet, and a long string of French Antiquaries, have agreed to call him *Wistace*. I shall here, in justice to *Maistre Wace*, (for whom I have a great respect, not only as a very antient but as a very ingenious Rimer,) state my reasons shortly for believing, that he was the real author of that translation in French verse of Geffrey of Monmouth's Romance, which is commonly called *Le Brut*.

In the first place his name is distinctly written in the text of three Mss. of very considerable antiquity. Two of them are in the Museum, viz. *Cotton*. Vitell. A. x. and *Reg*. 13 A. xxi. The third is at Cambridge, in the Library of Bennet College, n. 58. In a fourth Ms. also in the Museum, *Harl*. 6508. it is written *Gazce* and *Gace*, by a substitution of G for W, very usual in the French language.

Secondly, in the Ms. abovementioned of Layamon's history Cal. A. ix. if I may trust my own eyes, the name is *Wace;* and not *Wate*, as Wanley read it. The Saxon ꞇ is not very unlike a c. What Layamon has said further, "that this Wace was a French Clerk, and presented his book to Alienor, the Queen of Henry" (the

metre, yet he often intermixes a number of short verses, of unequal lengths but riming together pretty exactly, and in some places he has imitated not unsuccessfully the regular octosyllable measure of his French original.

§ III. It may seem extraordinary, after these proofs, that the art of Riming was not

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Second,) agrees perfectly well with the date of *Le Brut* (in 1155, according to all the copies) and with the account which Wace himself, in his *Roman de Rou*, has given of his attachment to Henry.

Thirdly, in a subsequent translation of *Le Brut*, which was made by Robert of Brunne in the beginning of the XIVth Century, he repeatedly names *Mayster Wace*, as the author (or rather translator from the Latin) of the French History. See *Hearne's* App. to Pref. to *Peter Langtoft*, p. xcviii.

In opposition to this strong evidence in favour of *Wace*, we have nothing material, except the Ms. of *Le Brut* quoted by Fauchet (*de la Langue Françoise*, l. ii.), in which, according to his citation, the author is called *Wistace*. The later French writers, who have called him so, I apprehend, have only followed Fauchet. The Reader will judge, whether it is not more probable, that the writer of the Ms. or even Fauchet himself, may have made a little slip in this matter, than that so many Mss. as I have quoted above, and the successive testimonies of Layamon and Robert of Brunne, should have concurred in calling the author of *Le Brut* Wace, if that had not been his true name.

I will just add, that *La vie de Seint Nicholas*, which is frequently quoted by *Hickes* (Gr. A. S. p. 146. 149. et al.), was probably a work of this same *Wace*, as ap-

unknown or unpractised in this country in the time of Henry II. that we should be obliged to search through a space of above a hundred years, without being able to meet with a single maker of English Rimes, whom we know to have written in that interval. The case I suspect to have been this. The scholars of that age (and there were many who might fairly be called so, in the English dominions abroad (48) as well as at home)

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pears from the following passage. (Ms. Bodl. 1687. v. 17. from the end.)

> Ci faut le livre *mestre Guace*,
> Qil ad de Seint Nicholas fait,
> De Latin en Romaunz estreit
> A Osberd le fiz Thiout,
> Qui Seint Nicholas mout amout.—

And I should suspect, that *Le Martyre de St. George en vers François par Robert Guaco*, mentioned by M. Lebeuf as extant in the Bibl. Colbert. Cod. 3745 (Mem. de l'Acad. D. J. et B. L. t. xvii. p. 731.) ought to be ascribed to the same author, as *Guaco* is a very strange name. The Christian name of Wace was *Robert*. See Huet, Orit. de Caen, p. 412.

(48) The following passage of Roger de Hoveden (p. 672.) gives a striking description of the extent of the English dominions in the time of Richard I. *Sciendum est quod tota terra, quæ, est ab Anglia usque in Hispaniam, secus mare, videlicet Normannia, Britannia, Pictavia, est de dominio Regis Angliæ.* The Kings of France at that

affected to write only (49) in Latin, so that we do not find that they ever composed, in verse or prose, in any other language. On the other hand they, who meant to recommend themselves by their Poetry to the favour of the great, took care to write in French, the only language which their patrons understood; and hence it is, that we

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time were not possessed of an inch of territory upon the coasts of the Ocean.

(49) It will be sufficient to name John of Salisbury, Peter of Blois, Joseph of Exeter, Gerald Barry, Nigell Wireker, Geffrey Vinsauf. I should add to this list Walter Map, if there were not a tradition, not entirely destitute of probability, that he was the author of the *Roman de Saint Graal* in French. I find this in an old Ms. of Tristan, Bib. Reg. 20. D. ii. p. antep. *Quant Boort ot conte laventure del Saint Graal, teles come eles estoient avenues, eles furent mises en escrit, gardees en lamere de Salibieres, dont Mestre Galtier Maplestrest a faire son livre du Saint Graal, por lamor du roy Herri son sengnor, qui fist lestorie tralater del Latin en Romanz.* The adventure of the *Saint Graal* is plainly written upon a very different plan from the other Romances of the Round Table, and is likely enough to have come from an Ecclesiastick, though rather, I confess, from a graver one than Walter Map may be supposed to have been. The French Romance, from which our Romance called "*Mort d'Arthur*" is translated, seems to be an injudicious jumble of *Le Brut*, *Lancelot*, *Tristan*, the *Saint Graal*, and some other Romances of less note, which were all, I apprehend, originally separate works.

see so many French poems (50), about that time, either addressed directly to the principal persons at the English court, or at least written on such subjects as we may suppose to have been most likely to engage their attention. Whatever therefore of English Poetry was produced, in this infancy of the art, being probably the work of illiterate au-

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(50) *Le Bestiaire*, by *Philippe de Thaun*, addressed to Queen Adelisa; *Le Brut* and *Le Roman de Rou*, by *Wace*, have been mentioned above. Besides the *Roman de Rou*, there is another Chronicle of Normandy in French verse by *Maitre Beneit*, compiled by order of Henry II. Ms. *Harl.* 1717. The same *Beneit* was, perhaps, the author of the *Vie de St. Thomas*, Ms. *Harl.* 3775. though he there calls himself

> "*Frere Beneit, le pecheour,*
> *ove les neirs dras*"—

At the end of a copy of *Le Brut*, Bib. *Reg.* 13 A. xxi. there is a Continuation of the History to the death of William II. in the same Metre, by a *Geffrei Gaimar*, which escaped the observation of Mr. Casley; and at the end of another copy, *Vitell.* A. x. the History is continued by an anonymous author to the accession of King John.

Richard I. composed himself in French. A specimen of his Poetry has been published by Mr. Walpole, Cat. of Royal Authors, v. i. And his Chancellor, William Bishop of Ely (who, as has been observed before, "was totally ignorant of the English language"), was by no means behind hand with his Master in his

thors and circulating only among the vulgar (51), we need not be much surprised that no more of it has been transmitted down to posterity.

§ IV. The learned Hickes, however, has pointed out to us two very curious pieces, which may with probability be referred to this period. The first of them is a Para-

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encouragement of French Poets; for of this Bishop the passage in Hoveden is to be understood, which Mr. Walpole has applied to the King himself. It is part of a letter of Hugh Bishop of Coventry, who, speaking of the *Bishop of Ely*, says, that HE, "*ad augmentum et famam sui nominis, emendicata carmina et rythmos adulatorios comparabat, et* de regno Francorum *cantores et joculatores muneribus allexerat, ut de illo canerent in plateis; et jam dicebatur ubique, quod non erat talis in orbe.*" Hoveden, p. 103.

(51) To these causes we may probably impute the loss of those Songs upon Hereward (the last perhaps of the Saxon heroes,) which, according to Ingulphus, "were sung about the streets" in his time. Hist. Croyl. p. 68. Robert of Brunne also mentions "a Rime" concerning Gryme the Fisher, the founder of Grymesby; Hanelok the Dane; and his wife Goldeburgh, daughter to a King Athelwold; who all now, together with their bard,

> — illacrymabiles
> Urgentur ignotique longâ
> Nocte.—

See translation of Peter of Langtoft, p. 25. and Camden's Brit. p. 569.

phrase of the Gospel Histories, entitled *Ormulum*(52), by one *Orm*, or *Ormin*. It seems

(52) The Ormulum seems to be placed by Hickes among the first writings after the Conquest [Gram. Ang. Sax. c. xxii. p. 165.], but, I confess, I cannot conceive it to have been earlier than the reign of Henry II. There is a peculiarity in the author's orthography, which consists in doubling the Consonants; e. g. brother, he writes, *brotherr*; after, *afterr*, &c. He has done this by design, and charges those who shall copy his book to be very careful to write those letters twice, which he has written so, as otherwise, he assures them, "they will not write the word right." Hickes has taken notice of this peculiarity, but has not attempted to explain the author's reasons for it; and indeed, without a more perfect knowledge than we now probably can have of the Saxon pronunciation, they seem totally inexplicable. In the few lines, which I think it necessary to quote here as a specimen of the Metre, I shall venture (first begging Ormin's pardon for disregarding his injunction) to leave out the superfluous letters, and I shall also for my own ease as well as that of the reader transcribe them in modern characters. The first lines of Wanley's extract from Ms. *Bod.* Junius. 1. [Cat. Codd. Mss. Septent. p. 59.] will answer my purpose as well as any other.

Nu, brother Walter, brother min after the fleshes kinde,
And brother min i Cristendom thurh fulluht and thurh trowthe,
And brother min i Godes hus yet o the thride wise,
Thurh that wit hafen taken ba an reghel boc to folghen
Under kanunkes-had and lif swa sum Sant Awstin sette,
Ic hafe don swa sum thu bad, and *forbed*[a] te thin wille,

[a] r. *forthed*. Ms.

to have been considered as mere Prose by Hickes and by Wanley, who have both given

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Ic hafe wend intil English godspelles halighe lare,
After that little wit that me min Drihten hafeth lened—

The reader will observe, that, in calling these verses of fifteen syllables, I consider the words—*kinde, trowthe, wise, sette, wille, lare*—as dissyllables.

The laws of metre require that they should be so considered, as much as *folghen* and *lened*: and for the same reason *thride* in ver. 3 and *hafe* in ver. 6 and 7. are to be pronounced as consisting of two syllables.

It is the more extraordinary that neither Hickes nor Wanley should have perceived that Ormin wrote in metre, as he himself mentions his having added words for the sake of *filling* his *Rime*, or *Verse*, for he calls it by both those names in the following passages:

Ic hafe sett her o this boc among Godspelles wordes
All thurh me selfen manig word, the *Rime* swa to *fillen*—

And again,

And ic ne mihte noht min *fers* ay with Godspelles wordes
Wel *fillen* all, and all forthi sholde ic wel ofte nede
Among Godspelles wordes don min word, min *fers* to *fillen*—

It is scarce necessary to remark, that *Rime* is here to be understood in its original sense, as denoting the whole verse, and not merely the consonancy of the final syllables. In the second quotation *fers*, or *verse*, is substituted for it as a synonymous term. Indeed I doubt whether, in the time of Ormin, the word *Rime* was, in any language, used singly to convey the idea of Consonant terminations.

large extracts from it: but, I apprehend, every reader, who has an ear for metre, will easily perceive that it is written very exactly in verses of fifteen syllables, without Rime, in imitation of the most common species of the Latin Tetrameter Iambic. The other piece(53), which is a moral Poem upon old age, &c., is in Rime, and in a metre much resembling the former, except that the verse of fifteen syllables is broken into two, of which the first should regularly contain eight and the second seven syllables; but the metre is not so exactly observed, at least in the copy which Hickes has followed, as it is in the *Ormulum*.

§ V. In the next interval, from the latter end of the reign of Henry III. to the middle of the fourteenth century, when we may suppose Chaucer was beginning to write, the number of English Rimers seems to have increased very much. Besides several, whose

(53) A large extract from this Poem has been printed by Hickes [Gram. Ang. Sax. c. xxiv. p. 222.], but evidently from very incorrect Mss. It begins thus:

Ic am nu elder thanne ic wes
A wintre and ec a lore;
Ic ealdi more thanne ic dede,
Mi wit oghte to bi more.

names we know (54), it is probable that a great part of the anonymous Authors, or rather Translators (55), of the popular Poems,

(54) Robert of Gloucester and Robert of Brunne have been mentioned already.

To these may be added Richard Rolle, the hermite of Hampole, who died in 1340, after having composed a large quantity of English rimes. See Tanner, Bib. Brit. Art. Hampole.—Laurence Minot, who has left a collection of Poems upon the principal events of the former part of the reign of Edward III. Ms. *Cotton.* Galba. E. ix.—Within the same period flourished the two Poets, who are mentioned with great commendations by Robert of Brunne [App. to Pref. to Peter Langt. p. xcix.] under the names "Of Ercldoun and of Kendale." We have no memorial, that I know, remaining of the latter, besides this passage; but the former I take to have been the famous Thomas Leirmouth, of Ercildoun (or Ersilton, as it is now called, in the shire of Merch,) who lived in the time of Edward I. and is generally distinguished by the honourable addition of "The Rhymour." As the learned Editor of "Ancient Scottish Poems, Edinburgh, 1770," has, for irrefragable reasons, deprived this Thomas of a Prophecy in verse, which had usually been ascribed to him [see Mackenzie, Art. Thomas Rhymour], I am inclined to make him some amends by attributing to him a Romance of "Sir Tristrem;" of which Robert of Brunne, an excellent judge! [in the place above cited] says,

> Over gestes it has th'esteem,
> Over all that is or was,
> If men it sayd as made Thomas.

(55) See Dr. Percy's curious *Catalogue of English Metrical Romances*, prefixed to the third Volume of

which (from their having been originally written in the Roman, or French, language) were called Romances, flourished about this

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Reliques of ancient Poesy. I am inclined to believe that we have no English Romance, prior to the age of Chaucer, which is not a translation or imitation of some earlier French Romance. The principal of those, which, being built upon English stories, bid the fairest for having been originally composed in English, are also extant in French. A considerable fragment of *Horn-child*, or *Dan Horn* as he is there called, is to be found in French Alexandrines in Ms. *Harl.* 527. The first part of *Guy of Warwick* is in French, in the octosyllable metre, in Ms. *Harl.* 3775. and the last part in the same language and metre in Ms. Bib. *Reg.* 8 F. ix. How much may be wanting I have not had opportunity to examine. I have never seen *Bevis* in French; but Du Fresnoy, in his *Biblioth. des Romans*, t. ii. p. 241. mentions a Ms. of *Le Roman de Beuves de Hantonne*, and another of *Le Roman de Beuves et Rosiane, en Rime;* and the Italians, who were certainly more likely to borrow from the French than from the English language, had got among them a Romance *di Buovo d'Antona* before the year 1348. Quadrio, Storia della Poesia, t. vi. p. 542.

However, I think it extremely probable that these three Romances, though originally written in French, were composed in England, and perhaps by Englishmen; for we find that the general currency of the French language here engaged several of our own countrymen to use it in their compositions. Peter of Langtoft may be reckoned a dubious instance, as he is said by some to have been a Frenchman; but Robert Grosseteste, the famous Bishop

time. It is unnecessary to enter into particulars here concerning any of them, as they do not appear to have invented, or imported

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of Lincoln in the time of Henry III. was a native of Suffolk, and yet he wrote his *Chasteau d'Amours*, and his *Manuel des Pechées* in French. [Tanner's Bib. Brit. and Hearne's Pref. to Rob. of Gloucester, p. lviii.]—There is a translation of *Cato* in French verse by *Helis de Guincestre*, i. e. Winchester, Ms. *Harl.* 4388. and a Romance also in French verse, which I suppose to be the original of the English *Ipomedon* [Percy's Cat. n. 22.] by *Hue de Rotelande*, is to be found in Ms. *Cotton.* Vesp. A. vii.—A French Dialogue in verse, Ms. *Bod.* 3904. entitled, "*La pleinte par entre mis Sire Henry de Lacy Counte de Nichole et Sire Wauter de Bybelesworth pur la croiserie en la terre Seinte*," was most probably composed by the latter, who has also left us another work in French prose. [See his article in Tanner, Bibl. Brit.]—Even as late as the time of Chaucer, Gower wrote his *Speculum meditantis* in French, but whether in verse or prose is uncertain. John Stowe, who was a diligent searcher after Mss. had never seen this work [Annals, p. 326.]: nor does either Bale or Pits set down the beginning of it, as they generally do of the books which they have had in their hands. However, one French Poem of Gower's has been preserved. In Ms. *Harl.* 3869. it is connected with the *Confessio Amantis* by the following rubric: "Puisqu'il ad dit cidevant en Englois par voie d'essample la sotie de cellui qui par amours aime par especial, dirra ore apres en Francois a tout le monde en general une traitie selonc les auctours, pour essampler les amants marriez, au fin q'ils la foi de leurs seints espousailles pourront par fine loialte guarder, et al honeur de dieu

from abroad, any new modes of Versification, by which the Art could be at all advanced (56),

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salvement tenir." Pr. *Le creatour de toute creature.* It contains LV Stanzas of 7 verses each, in the last of which is the following apology for the language:

> " Al' universite de tout le monde
> *Johan Gower* ceste Balade envoie,
> Et si jeo nai de Francois la faconde,
> Pardonetz moi qe jeo de ceo forsvoie;
> Jeo suis Englois, si quier par tiele voie
> Estre excuse ——."

Chaucer himself seems to have had no great opinion of the performances of his countrymen in French. [Prol. to Test. of Love, ed. 1542.] "Certes (says he) there ben some that speke theyr poysy mater in Frenche, of whyche speche the Frenche men have as good a fantasye, as we have in hearing of French mennes Englyshe." And he afterwards concludes with his usual good sense. "Let then Clerkes endyten in Latyn, for they have the propertye of science and the knowinge in that facultye; and lette Frenchmen in theyr Frenche also endyte theyr queynt termes, for it is kyndly to theyr mouthes; and let us shewe our fantasyes in suche wordes as we lerneden of our dames tonge."

(56) It was necessary to qualify the assertion, that the Rimers of this period "did not invent or import from abroad any new modes of Versification," as, in fact, Robert of Brunne (in the passage referred to in n. 54.) has mentioned three or four sorts of verse, different from any which we have hitherto met with, and which appear to have been much cultivated, if not introduced, by the writers who flourished a little before himself. He calls them *Couwee*, *Strangere*, *Enterlace*, and *Baston*. Mr.

or even to have improved those which were before in use. On the contrary, as their

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Bridges, in a sensible letter to Thomas Hearne [App. to Pref. to Peter Langt. p. ciii.] pointed out these terms as particularly "needing an explanation;" but Thomas chose rather to stuff his book with accounts *of the Nunnery at Little Gidding*, &c. which cost him only the labour of transcribing. There can be little doubt, I think, that the Rimes called *Couwée* and *Enterlacée* were derived from the *Versus Caudati* and *Interlaqueati* of the Latin Rimers of that age. Though Robert of Brunne in his Prologue professes not to attempt these elegancies of composition, yet he has intermixed several passages in Rime *Couwée;* [see p. 266. 273, 6, 7, 8, 9, et al.] and almost all the latter part of his work from the Conquest is written in Rime *Enterlacée*, each couplet riming in the middle as well as at the end. [This was the nature of the *Versus interlaqueati*, according to the following specimen, Ms. *Harl.* 1002.

> Plausus Grecorum | lux cecis et via claudis |
> Incola celorum | virgo dignissima laudis.]

I cannot pretend to define the exact form of the Rime called *Baston*, but I dare say it received its appellation from the Carmelite, *Robert Baston*, a celebrated Latin Riiner in the reigns of Edward I. and II. [See Tanner, Bibl. Brit. in v. and Hearne's Pref. to Fordun, p. ccxxvi. et seq.] His verses upon the battle of Bannockburn, in 1313, are printed in the Appendix to Fordun, p. 1570. They afford instances of all the whimsical combinations of Rimes which can well be conceived to find a place in the Latin heroic metre.

As to Rime *Strangere*, I suspect (upon considering the whole passage in Robert of Brunne) that it was

works were intended for the ear more than for the eye, to be recited rather than read, they were apt to be more attentive to their Rimes than to the exactness of their Metres, from a presumption, I suppose, that the defect, or redundance, of a syllable might be easily covered in the recitation, especially if accompanied, as it often was, by some musical instrument.

§ VI. Such was, in general, the state of English Poetry at the time when Chaucer probably made his first essays. The use of Rime was established; not exclusively (for the Author of the "Visions of Pierce Ploughman" wrote after the year 1350 (57) without

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rather a general name, including all sorts of *uncommon* Rimes, than appropriated to any particular species.

Upon the whole, if this account of these new modes of Versification shall be allowed to be any thing like the truth, I hope I shall be thought justified in having added, "that the Art could not be at all advanced by them."

(57) This is plain from fol. 68. edit. 1550, where the year 1350 is named as a year of great scarcity. Indeed, from the mention of the Kitten in the tale of the Rattons, fol. iii. iiii. I should suspect that the author wrote at the very end of the reign of Edward III. when Richard was become heir apparent.

The Visions *of* (i. e. *concerning*) Pierce Ploughman are generally ascribed to one *Robert Langland*; but the

Rime,) but very generally; so that in this respect he had little to do but to imitate his

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best Mss. that I have seen, make the Christian name of the author *William*, without mentioning his surname. So in Ms. *Cotton.* Vesp. B. xvi. at the end of p. 1. is this rubric. "Hic incipit secundus passus de visione *Willelmi* de Petro Plouhman." And in ver. 5. of p. 2. instead of, "*And sayde;* sonne, *slepest thou?*" The Ms. has, "*And sayde;* Wille, *slepest thou?*" See also the account of Ms. *Harl.* 2376. in the Harleian Catalogue.

I cannot help observing, that these Visions have been printed from so faulty and imperfect a Ms. that the author, whoever he was, would find it difficult to recognize his own work. However, the judgment of the learned Doctors, Hickes and Percy, [Gram. A. S. p. 217. —Rel. of Anc. Poet. v. ii. p. 260.] with respect to the laws of his versification, is confirmed by the Mss. Each of his verses is in fact a distich, composed of two verses, after the Saxon form, without Rime, and not reducible to any certain Metre. I do not mean to say, that a few of his verses may not be picked out, consisting of fourteen and fifteen syllables, and resembling the metre used in the *Ormulum;* and there are still more of twelve and thirteen syllables, which might pass for very tolerable Alexandrines: but then, on the other hand, there is a great number of his verses (warranted for genuine by the best Mss.) which cannot, by any mode of pronunciation, be extended beyond nine or ten syllables: so that it is impossible to imagine, that his verse was intended to consist of any determinate number of syllables. It is as clear that his Accents, upon which the harmony of modern Rythms depends, are not disposed according to any regular system. The first division of a verse is often Trochaic, and the last Iambic; and *vice versâ.*

predecessors. The Metrical part of our Poetry was capable of more improvement, by the polishing of the measures already in use as well as by the introducing of new modes of versification; and how far Chaucer actually contributed to the improvement of it, in both or either of these particulars, we are now to consider.

§ VII. With respect to the regular Metres then in use, they may be reduced, I think, to four. First, the long Iambic Metre (58), con-

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The only rule, which he seems really to have prescribed to himself, is what has been taken notice of by his first Editor, viz. "to have three wordes at the leaste in every verse whiche beginne with some one letter." Crowley's Pref. to Edit. 1550.

(58) The most perfect example of this metre has been given above, n. 52, from the *Ormulum*. Each verse is composed of fifteen syllables, and broken by a *Cæsura* at the eighth, which always terminates a word. The accents are so disposed upon the even syllables, particularly the eighth and fourteenth, as to produce the true Iambic Cadence.

The learned reader will recollect, that the *Political verses*, as they are called, of Tzetzes, and others, who wrote when the Greek versification was become Rythmical instead of Metrical, are *chiefly* of this form. See Du Cange, v. Politici versus. And it is remarkable, that, about the time of our Orm, Ciullo d'Alcamo, a Poet of Sicily, where the Greek was still a living language, [Montf. Palæog. Gr. l. vi.] made use of these verses of fifteen syllables, intermixed with Hendeca-

sisting of not more than fifteen, nor less than fourteen syllables, and broken by a *Cæsura*

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syllables, in the only production of his which has been preserved. Raccolta dell' Allacci, p. 408—16. The first Stanza is quoted by Crescimbeni, [Istor. d. V. P. l. i. p. 3.] who however labours very much to persuade us that the verses in question ought not to be considered as verses of fifteen syllables, but as containing each of them two verses, the one of eight and the other of seven syllables. If this were allowed, the nature of the verse would not be altered: [See before, p. 208.] but the supposition is highly improbable, as by that distribution there would be three verses in each Stanza not riming. In what follows, Crescimbeni shews very plainly that he had not adverted to the real nature of Ciullo's measure, for he compares it with the noted tetrameter, "Gallias Cæsar subegit, Nicomedes Cæsarem," which is a *Trochaic*, whereas these verses of Ciullo are evidently *Iambics*, like those of Orm.

I suspect, that, if we could recover the genuine text of Robert of Gloucester, he would be found to have written in this Metre. It was used by Warner, in his *Albions England* (another Chronicle in verse) in the latter end of Q. Elizabeth's reign; and Gascoigne about the same time [*Instruction concerning the making of verse in Eng.* Signature U. ii.] speaks of the couplet, consisting of one verse of twelve and another of fourteen syllables, as *the commonest sort of verse* then in use. It may be proper to observe, that the metre, which Gascoigne calls a verse of fourteen syllables, is exactly the same with what is called above a verse of fifteen syllables; just as the French Alexandrin may be composed indifferently of twelve or thirteen syllables, and the Italian Hendecasyllable of ten, eleven, or even twelve. The general rule

at the eighth syllable. Secondly, the Alexandrin Metre (59), consisting of not more than thirteen syllables, nor less than twelve, with a *Cæsura* at the sixth. Thirdly, the Octosyllable Metre; which was in reality the antient Dimeter Iambic. Fourthly, the stanza of six verses; of which the first, second, fourth, and fifth, were in the complete Octosyllable Metre; and the third and last catalectic, i. e. wanting a syllable, or even two.

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in all these kinds of verse is, that, when they consist of the greater number of syllables, the superfluous syllables, as they may be called, are never accented.

(59) Robert of Brunne, in his translation of *Peter of Langtoft*, seems to have used the *Alexandrin* verse in imitation of his Original; but his Metre (at least in Hearne's copy) is frequently defective, especially in the latter part of his work, where he affects to rime at the *Cæsura* as well as at the end of his verse.

The Alexandrin metre is generally agreed to have been first used in the *Roman d'Alexandre*, by Lambert li Cors and Alexandre de Bernay, toward the latter end of the twelfth Century. Du Verdier, Bibl. p. 780. Fauchet, l. ii. A late French Antiquary (M. L'Eveque de la Ravaliere,) in his history *Des revolutions de la langue Françoise*, p. 165, has combated this opinion, upon the authority of some Alexandrin verses, which he has discovered, as he supposes, in the *Roman de Rou*. I shall only observe, that no such verses are to be found in a very good Ms. of the *Roman de Rou*, Bib. *Reg.* 4 C. xi. and I very much suspect that upon an accurate examination they will appear to have been not the work of *Wace*, but

§ VIII. In the first of these Metres it does not appear that Chaucer ever composed at all, (for, I presume, no one can imagine that he was the author of Gamelyn,) or in the second; and in the fourth we have nothing of his but the Rime of Sire Thopas, which, being intended to ridicule the vulgar Romancers, seems to have been purposely written in their favourite Metre. In the third, or Octosyllable Metre (60), he has left several

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of some later author. A similar mistake of an interpolation, or continuation, for the original work has led another very able Antiquary of the same nation to place the *Roman de Rou* in the fourteenth Century. Mém. de l'Acad. des I. et B. L. tom. xv. p. 582. There can be no doubt, that *Wace* wrote the *Roman de Rou* about the middle of the twelfth Century. See before, n. 47.

They who attend only to the length of the Alexandrin verse, will naturally derive it from the Trimeter Iambic rythms, which were in frequent use in the beginning of the twelfth Century. See Orderic. Vital. l. ii. p. 404. 409, 410. 415, et al. But when it is considered, that the *Cæsura* at the sixth syllable, so essential to the Alexandrin metre, was hardly ever observed in the Trimeter Iambic, it will seem more probable, I think, that the inventor of the Alexandrin took for his model, what has been called above, the long Iambic, but, for some reason or other, retrenched a foot, or two syllables, in the first hemistich.

(60) Though I call this the Octosyllable Metre from what I apprehend to have been its original form, it often consists of nine and sometimes of ten syllables; but the eighth is always the last accented syllable.

compositions; particularly, "an imperfect Translation of the *Roman de la Rose*," which was, probably, one of his earliest per-

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The oldest French poems, to the latter end of the twelfth Century, are all in this metre; but upon the invention of the Alexandrin, the octosyllable verse seems by degrees to have been confined to the several species of lighter compositions, in which it is still used. Here in England, Robert of Brunne, in his Preface to his translation of *Le Brut* [App. to Pref. to Peter Langtoft, p. c.] calls it "*light rime*," in contradistinction to "strange rime," of which he has just enumerated several sorts [see n. 56.]; and says, that he wrote in it "for luf of the lewed man:" and Chaucer himself speaks of it in nearly the same terms in the beginning of the third book of the *House of Fame*.

> "God of science and of light,
> Apollo, thurgh thy grete might
> This little last book now thou gye;
> Not that I will for maystrye
> Here art potential be shewde;
> But, for the ryme is *light and lewde*,
> Yet make it somewhat agreable,
> Though some verse fayle in a syllable."

The learned Editor of a part of the Canterbury Tales [London, 1737, 8vo.] has quoted this passage as proving, "by Chaucer's own confession, that he did not write in equal measure."

It certainly proves, that he did not write in equal measure *in this particular poem* of the House of Fame; but it proves also, that he knew well what the laws of measure were, and that he thought that any deviation from them required an apology. Is it just to conclude,

formances; "The House of Fame;" "the Dethe of the Duchesse Blanche," and a poem called his "Dreme:" upon all which it will

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because Chaucer has owned a neglect of those laws in one work, written in light metre, and in which he formally disclaims any exertion of art, [ver. 4, 5.] that therefore he has been equally negligent of them in his other works, written in the gravest metre, and in which he may reasonably be supposed to have employed his utmost skill of versification? In the Troilus, for instance, [b. v.] he has a solemn prayer, "that none miswrite, or *mismetre* his book." Can we suppose that it was not originally written in Metre?—But I shall not enter any further into the general argument concerning Chaucer's versification, which will more properly be discussed in the text. My business here was only to prevent the reader from coming to the question with a preconceived opinion (upon the authority of the learned Editor abovementioned) that "Chaucer himself," in this passage of the House of Fame, "has put the matter out of dispute."

To return again to the Octosyllable Metre. Its constitution is such, that the first syllable may often be dropped without much prejudice to the harmony of the verse; and as far as I have observed, that is the syllable in which Chaucer's verses of this kind generally fail. We have an instance in the first line of the passage quoted above—

God of science and of light—

sounds as well (to my ear at least) as—

Thou God of science and of light—

according to Mr. Urry's correction. The reason, I appre-

be sufficient here to observe in general, that, if he had given no other proofs of his poetical faculty, these alone must have secured to him the pre-eminence above all his predecessors and contemporaries, in point of Versification.

§ IX. But by far the most considerable part of Chaucer's works is written in that kind of Metre which we now call the Heroic (61),

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hend, is, that the measure, though of another sort, is still regular: instead of a Dimeter Iambic, it is a Dimeter Trochaic Catalectic.

But no such liberty can be taken in the Heroic Metre without totally destroying its harmony: and therefore when the abovementioned learned Editor says [Pref. p. xxvi.] that the numbers of Chaucer "are always musical, whether they want or exceed their complement," I doubt his partiality for his author has carried him too far. I have no conception myself that an heroic verse, which wants a syllable of its complement, can be musical, or even tolerable. The line which he has quoted from the Knightes Tale [ver. 1228 of this Edition],

Not in purgatory but in helle—

however you manage it; (whether you make a pause; or give two times to the first syllable, as he rather advises;) —can never pass for a verse of any form. Nor did Chaucer intend that it should. He wrote (according to the best Mss.)—

Not *only* in purgatory but in helle.

(61) The Heroic Metre with us, as with the Italians,

either in Distichs or in Stanzas; and as I have not been able to discover any instance of this metre being used by any English poet before him, I am much inclined to suppose that he was the first introducer of it into our language. It had long been practised in France, in the Northern as well as the Southern provinces; and in Italy, within the last fifty years before Chaucer wrote, it had been

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is of the Iambic form, and consists of ten, eleven, or twelve syllables; the tenth, however, being in all cases the last accented syllable. The French have the same Metre; but with them it can scarce contain more than eleven syllables, as their language has few (if any) words, in which the accent is laid upon the Antepenultima. Though we have a great number of such words, we seldom use the verse of twelve syllables. The extraordinary difficulty of riming with three syllables is a sufficient reason for excluding it from all works which are written in Rime, and in Blank Metre the two unaccented syllables at the end make the close of the verse heavy and languid. Milton, for the sake of variety of measure, has inserted a very few of these verses, which the Italians call *Sdrucciolí*, in his heroic poems; but they are more commonly and, I think, more properly employed in Dramatic compositions, where a continued stateliness of numbers is less requisite.

The generical name for this Metre in Italy is *Endecasyllabo;* and the verses of ten and twelve syllables are distinguished by additions; the former being called *Endecasyllabo tronco*, and the latter *Endecasyllabo sdrucciolo*. This proves, I think, that the verse of eleven syllables

cultivated with the greatest assiduity and success, in preference to every other metre, by Dante, Petrarch, and Boccace. When we reflect that two of Chaucer's juvenile

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was the primitive metre, and principally used, as it still is, in Italy; and it will appear hereafter, if I am not mistaken, that the greatest part of Chaucer's heroic verses, when properly written and pronounced, are in this measure.

A learned correspondent, whom I have not the honour to know, *cannot acquiesce* in this notion, "that the greatest part of Chaucer's heroic verses, when properly written and pronounced, are verses of eleven syllables;" and for a proof of the contrary, he refers me particularly to the *Nonnes Preestes Tale*, ver. 14970, and the verses following and preceding. I am sorry that by an unguarded expression I should have exposed myself to a controversy, which can only be decided by a careful examination of the final syllables of between thirty and forty thousand lines. It would answer my purpose as well to say "*a great part*" instead of the "*greatest part*;" but in support of my first idea I must be permitted to observe, that I have carefully examined a hundred lines which precede, and as many which follow ver. 14970, and I find, that a clear majority of them, *as they are printed*, end in *e* feminine, and consequently, according to my hypothesis, have an eleventh syllable. I observe too, that several more *ought to have been printed* as ending with an *e* feminine; but whether the omission of it should be imputed to the defectiveness of the Mss. or to the negligence of the collator, I cannot be certain. See the concluding note of the Essay, &c. p. 251.

productions, the Palamon and Arcite, and the Troilus, were in a manner translated from the *Theseida* and the *Filostrato* of Boccace (62), both written in the common Italian hendeca-

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(62) It is so little a while since the world has been informed that the Palamon and Arcite of Chaucer was taken from the *Theseida* of Boccace, that it would not have been surprising if another century had elapsed without our knowing that our countryman had also borrowed his Troilus from the *Filostrato* of the same author; as the *Filostrato* is more scarce, and much less famous, even in Italy, than the *Theseida*. The first suspicion which I entertained of this theft was from reading the title of the *Filostrato* at large, in *Saxii* Hist. Lit. Typog. Mediolan. *ad an.* 1498; and I afterwards found, in Montfaucon's Bibl. Mss. t. ii. p. 793. among the King of France's Mss. one with this title, "*Philostrato, dell' amorose fatiche di Troilo per Gio Boccaccio.*" See also Quadrio, t. vi. p. 473. I had just employed a person to procure me some account of this Ms. from Paris, when I had the good fortune to meet with a printed copy in the very curious Collection of the Reverend Mr. Crofts. The title is "Il Fylostrato, che tracta de lo innamoramento de Troylo e Gryseida: et de molte altre infinite battaglie. Impresso nella inclita cita de Milano per magistro Uldericho Scinzenzeler nell anno M. CCCC lxxxxviii. a di xxvii. di mese de Septembre, in 4°." By the favour of the learned owner (who is as free in the communication, as he has been zealous in the collection, of his literary treasures) I had soon an opportunity of satisfying myself, that Chaucer was to the full as much obliged to Boccace in his Troilus as in his Knightes Tale.

The doubts which Quadrio mentions [t. vi. p. 474.],

syllable verse, it cannot but appear extremely probable that his metre also was copied from the same original; and yet I cannot find that the form of his Stanza in the Troilus,

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whether the *Filostrato* was really a work of Boccace, are sufficiently answered, as he observes, by the concurring testimony of several antient Mss. which expressly name him as the author. And it may be remarked that Boccace himself, in his Decameron, has made the same honourable mention of this Poem as of the *Theseida;* though without acknowledging either for his own. In the introduction to the Sixth Day, he says, that "Dioneo insieme con Lauretta *di Troilo et di Chriseida* cominciarono cantare," just as afterwards, in the conclusion of the Seventh Day, we are told, that the same "Dioneo et la Fiammetta gran pezza cantarono insieme *d'Arcita et di Palemone*."

It may not be improper here to observe further, that a third poem, which is mentioned in the Decameron in the same manner with the *Theseida* and the *Filostrato*, was also probably one of Boccace's own compositions. In the conclusion of the Third Day, it is said, that "Dioneo et la Fiammetta cominciarono a cantare *di Messer Guiglielmo et della dama del Vergiu*." There is an old French Romance, upon this subject, as I apprehend, in Ms. Bodl. 2386. It is entitled *Le Romant de la Chastelaine du Vergy*, and begins thus:

Une maniere de gens sont
Qui d'estre loyaulx semblant font—
Ainsi qu'il avint en Bourgoigne
D'un chevalier preux et hardi
Et de la dame du Vergy.——

The story is the same, in the main, with that of the 70th

consisting of seven verses, was ever used by Boccace, though it is to be met with among the poems of the King of Navarre, and of the *Provençal* Rimers (63). Whichever he shall

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Novel in the Heptameron of the Queen of Navarre, from which, I suppose, the more modern *Histoire de la Comtesse du Vergi*, Par. 1722, is taken.

I cannot find that any Italian poem upon this subject is now extant; but the unaccountable neglect, with which the poetry of Boccace has been long treated by those very countrymen of his who idolize his prose, makes the supposition, I think, not improbable, that a small piece of this sort may have been suffered to perish, or even to lurk at this day, unpublished and unnoticed, in some Italian library.

(63) See *Poesies du Roi de Navarre*, Chans. xvi. xviii. xxvii. xxxiii. lviii. The only difference is, that the two last verses, which in Chaucer's Stanza form a distinct couplet, are made by Thibaut to rime with the first and third. In a Ms. of Provençal poetry (in the Collection of the Reverend Mr. Crofts), I find one piece by Folket de Marseilles, who died about 1213, in which the Stanza is formed exactly agreeable to Chaucer's.

This Stanza of seven verses, being first introduced, I apprehend, by Chaucer, was long the favourite measure of the Poets who succeeded him. In the time of Gascoigne it had acquired the name of *Rithme royall; and surely*, says he, *it is a royall kinde of verse serving best for grave discourses.* [Instruction concerning the making of verse. Sign. U. 1. b.] Milton, in some of his juvenile compositions, has made the last verse of this Stanza an Alexandrin.

As the *Theseida* and the *Filostrato* of Boccace are

be supposed to have followed, whether the French or Italians, it is certain that he could not want in either language a number of models of correct and harmonious versification; and the only question will be, whether he had ability and industry enough to imitate that part of their excellency.

§ X. In discussing this question we should always have in mind, that the correctness and harmony of an English verse depends entirely upon its being composed of a certain number of syllables, and its having the accents of those syllables properly placed. In order therefore to form any judgment of the Versification of Chaucer, it is necessary that we should know the syllabical value, if I may use the expression, of his words, and the accentual value of his syllables, as they were commonly pronounced (64) in his time; for

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both written in the Octave Stanza, of which he is often, though improperly called the inventor, [see Pasquier, *Recherches*, l. vii. c. 3.] it seems extraordinary that Chaucer should never have adopted that Stanza. Even when he uses a Stanza of eight verses (as in the Monkes Tale), it is constituted very differently from the Italian Octave. I observe, by the way, that Chaucer's Stanza of eight verses, with the addition of an Alexandrin, is the Stanza in which Spenser has composed his *Faery Queen*.

(64) Mons. l'Eveque de la Ravaliere, in his Discourse

without that knowledge, it is not more probable that we should determine justly upon the exactness of his metres, than that we should be able to cast up rightly an account stated in coins of a former age, of whose current rates and denominations we are totally ignorant.

§ XI. Let us consider a moment, how a sensible critic in the Augustan age would have proceeded, if called upon to examine a work of Ennius (65). When he found that a

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de l'ancienneté des Chansons Françoises, prefixed to the *Poësies du Roi de Navarre*, has the same observation with respect to the old French poets. *Leur Poësie* (says he, p. 227.) *marque combien ils respectoient cette règle* [of exact riming]; *mais pour en juger aujourd'-hui*, ainsi que de la mesure de leurs Vers, *il faut prononcer les mots comme eux*:—He is vindicating the antient French bards from an unjust and ignorant censure of Boileau, in his *Art. Poet.* Chant. i. So that, it should seem, a great Poet is not of course a judicious Antiquary. See above, n. 4. a censure of Chaucer's verse by our Dryden, who was certainly a *great Poet*.

(65) Though Ennius died not a hundred and fifty years before what may be called the age of Augustus, his language and versification are so different from those of Ovid, for instance, that I much question whether his poems were better relished, or even understood, by the vulgar Romans in that age, than the works of Chaucer are now by the generality of readers. However a great many of his verses are as smoothly turned as those of

great proportion of the verses were strictly conformable to the ordinary rules of Metre, he would, probably, not scruple to conclude that such a conformity must have been produced by art and design, and not by mere chance. On the other hand, when he found, that in some verses the number of feet, to appearance, was either deficient or redundant; that in others the feet were seemingly composed of too few or too many syllables, of short syllables in the place of long, or of long in the place of short; he would not, I think, immediately condemn the old Bard, as having all at once forgotten the fundamental principles of his art, or as having wilfully or negligently deviated from them. He would first, I presume, enquire, whether all these irregularities were in the genuine text of his author, or only the mistakes of Copyists: he would enquire further, by comparing the genuine text with other contemporary writings and monuments, whether many things, which appeared irregular, were not in truth suffi-

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Ovid himself, and it is well known, that Virgil has not scrupled to incorporate several of them into his divine Æneid. At the same time, whoever casts an eye over the Fragments of his Annals, as collected by Columna, Hesselius, and others, will find frequent examples of all the seeming irregularities alluded to in the text.

ciently regular, either justified by the constant practice, or excused by the allowed licence of the age: where authority failed, he would have recourse, but soberly, to etymology and analogy; and if after all a few passages remained, not reducible to the strict laws of Metre by any of the methods above-mentioned, if he were really (as I have supposed him) a sensible critic, he would be apt rather to expect patiently the solution of his difficulties from more correct manuscripts, or a more complete theory of his author's versification, than to cut the knot, by deciding peremptorily, that the work was composed without any regard to metrical rules.

§ XII. I beg leave to pursue the same course with respect to Chaucer. The great number of verses, sounding complete even to our ears, which is to be found in all the least corrected copies of his works, authorises us to conclude, that he was not ignorant of the laws of metre. Upon this conclusion it is impossible not to ground a strong presumption, that he intended to observe the same laws in the many other verses which seem to us irregular; and if this was really his intention, what reason can be assigned sufficient to account for his having failed so grossly and repeatedly, as is generally supposed, in

an operation, which every Balladmonger in our days, man, woman, or child, is known to perform with the most unerring exactness, and without any extraordinary fatigue?

§ XIII. The offences against metre in an English verse, as has partly been observed before, must arise either from a superfluity or deficiency of syllables, or from the accents being improperly placed.

§ XIV. With respect to the first species of irregularity, I have not taken notice of any superfluities in Chaucer's verses, but what may be reduced to just measure by the usual practices (66) of even modern Poets. And this, by the way, is a strong proof of his real attention to metrical rules; for otherwise, if he had written without any restraint of that kind, a certain proportion of his deviations

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(66) It is unnecessary to trouble the Reader with an enumeration of Syncope, Apostrophus, Synecphonesis, &c.

Quicquid habent telorum armamentaria vatum.

They may all, I think, be comprehended in our language under this one general principle, that an English verse, though chiefly composed of feet of two syllables, is capable of receiving feet of three syllables in every part of it, provided only one of the three syllables be accented.

In short, whoever can taste the metrical harmony of

from measure must, in all probability, have been on the side of excess.

§ XV. But a great number of Chaucer's verses labour under an apparent deficiency of a syllable, or two. In some of these perhaps the defect may still be supplied from Mss. but for the greatest part I am persuaded no such assistance is to be expected (67); and

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the following lines of Milton, will not be embarrassed how to dispose of the (seemingly) superfluous syllables, which he may meet with in Chaucer.

P. L. ii. 123. Óminous | conjecture on the whole success.
302. A pil | lar of state | ; deep on his front engraven—
653. Celestial spir | its in bón | dage, nor the abyss—
v. 495. No inconvenient di | et, nor tóo light fare.
vii. 122. Things not revealed, which the invis | ible Kíng—

(67) I would not be thought to undervalue the Mss. which I have not seen, or to discourage those who may have inclination and opportunity to consult them. I only mean to say, that, where the text is supported (as it generally is in this Edition) by the concurrence of two or three good Mss. and the sense is clear and complete, we may safely consider it as tolerably correct. In the course of the Notes, I shall have occasion to point out several passages, in which either the disagreement of the good Mss. or the obscurity of their readings, makes a further enquiry absolutely necessary in order to settle the text.

therefore, supposing the text in these cases to be correct, it is worth considering whether the verse also may not be made correct, by adopting in certain words a pronunciation, different indeed from modern practice, but which, we have reason to believe, was used by the author himself.

For instance, in the Genitive case Singular and the Plural Number of Nouns (which, as has been remarked above, in the time of Chaucer had the same expression), there can be no doubt that such words as, *shoures*, ver. 1. *croppes*, ver. 7. *shires*, ver. 15. *lordes*, ver. 47, &c. were regularly pronounced as consisting of two syllables. Whenever they are used as monosyllables, it must be considered as a Poetical Licence, warranted however even then (as we may presume from the natural progress of our language) by the practice of inaccurate speakers in common conversation.

In like manner, we may be sure that *ed*, the regular termination of the Past Tense and its Participle, made, or contributed to make, a second syllable in the words, *perced*, ver. 2. *bathed*, ver. 3. *loved*, ver. 45, *wered*, ver. 75, &c. (68). The first step toward re-

(68) It appears from the Preface to the last Edition of Chaucer's Works, Lond. 1721, that Mr. Urry, the

ducing words of this form to Monosyllables seems to have been to shorten the last syllable, either by transposing the final letters,

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undertaker of that Edition, had the same opinion with respect to the pronunciation of the final syllables in this and the last mentioned instance; and that it was his intention to distinguish those syllables, *whenever they were to be pronounced*, by printing them with an *i*, instead of an *e*; as, *shouris*, *shiris*, *percid*, *lovid*, &c. As such a distinction is entirely unsupported by the Mss. and must necessarily very much disfigure the orthography of the language, I cannot think that an Editor has a right to introduce it upon ever so plausible a pretence. A shorter and (in my opinion) a less exceptionable method would have been to have distinguished the syllables of this sort, *whenever they were to be contracted*, by adding a sign of Syncope; thus, *shoure's*, *shire's*, *perce'd*, *love'd*. But after all a reader, who cannot perform such operations for himself, had better not trouble his head about the Versification of Chaucer.

Mr. Urry had also discovered, that the final *e* (of which I shall treat more at large in the next Section) often made a syllable in Chaucer's verse; and (according to the Preface quoted above) he "always marked with an accent, when he judged it necessary to pronounce it; as, swetè, halvè, smalè, ver. 5, 8, 9." I have the same objection to this mark that I have to innovations in orthography; and besides, that it would be apt to mislead the ignorant reader (for whom only it can be intended), by making him suppose that the *e* so marked was really to be accented, whereas the true *e* feminine is always to be pronounced with an obscure evanescent sound, and is incapable of bearing any stress or accent.

as in—*wolde*, ver. 144. *sayde*, ver. 763, &c. or by throwing away the *d*, as in—*coste*, ver. 1910. *caste*, ver. 2083, &c. In both these cases the words still remained of two syllables, the final *e* being sounded as an *e* feminine; but they were prepared to lose their last syllable by the easy licence of changing an *e* feminine into an *e* mute, or of dropping it entirely, according to the modern practice.

§ XVI. But nothing will be found of such extensive use for supplying the deficiencies of Chaucer's metre as the pronunciation of the *e* feminine; and as that pronunciation has been for a long time totally antiquated, it may be proper here to suggest some reasons for believing (independently of any arguments to be drawn from the practice of Chaucer himself) that the final *e* in our antient language was very generally pronounced, as the *e* feminine is at this day by the French.

With respect to words imported directly from France, it is certainly quite natural to suppose, that, for some time, they retained their native pronunciation; whether they were Nouns substantive, as *hoste*, ver. 753. *face*, ver. 1580, &c.—or Adjectives, as, *large*, ver. 755. *strange*, ver. 13, &c.—or Verbs, as, *grante*, ver. 12756. *preche*, ver. 12327, &c.

and it cannot be doubted, that in these and other similar words in the French language, the final *e* was always pronounced, as it still is, so as to make them dissyllables.

We have not indeed so clear a proof of the original pronunciation of the Saxon part (69) of our language; but we know, from general observation, that all changes of pronunciation are usually made by small degrees; and

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(69) This is owing to the Saxons not having left us any metrical compositions, as has been observed before, p. 190. Hickes complains [Gr. A. S. c. xxiii. § 7.] "that it is difficult to know of how many syllables a Saxon verse sometimes consists, for this reason among others, *quod non constat quomodo voces in* e *fœminino vel obscuro terminatæ pronuntiandæ sunt in carmine.*" He might, perhaps with more propriety, have complained, that it is difficult to know how words ending in *e* feminine are to be pronounced in a Saxon verse, because it is uncertain of how many syllables any of their verses consisted. I have mentioned in the text two cases of words abbreviated, in which I think we might conclude from general reasoning that the final *e* was pronounced. As this Theory, with respect to these words, is entirely confirmed by the practice of Orm (the most authentic metrical composer that we have in our antient language) it would not perhaps be unreasonable to infer that the practice of Orm, in other words of Saxon original, in which the final *e* is pronounced, is consonant to the old Saxon usage. However that may be, the practice of Orm must certainly be admitted to prove, that such a pronunciation prevailed at least 150 years before Chaucer.

therefore, when we find that a great number of those words, which in Chaucer's time ended in *e*, originally ended in *a*, we may reasonably presume, that our ancestors first passed from the broader sound of *a* to the thinner sound of *e* feminine, and not at once from *a* to *e* mute. Besides, if the final *e* in such words was not pronounced, why was it added? From the time that it has confessedly ceased to be pronounced it has been gradually omitted in them, except where it may be supposed of use to lengthen or soften (70) the preceding syllable, as in *hope*, *name*, &c. But according to the ancient orthography it terminates many words of Saxon original, where it cannot have been added for any such purpose, as, *herte*, *childe*, *olde*, *wilde*, &c. In these therefore we must suppose that it

(70) In most of the words in which the final *e* has been omitted, its use in lengthening or softening the preceding syllable has been supplied by an alteration in the Orthography of that Syllable. Thus, in—*grete*, *mete*, *stele*, *rede*, *dere*,—in which the first *e* was originally long, as closing a syllable, it has (since they have been pronounced as Monosyllables) been changed either into *ea*, as in—*great*, *meat*, *steal*, *read*, *dear*; or into *ee*, as in *greet*, *meet*, *steel*, *reed*, *deer*. In like manner the *o* in—*bote*, *fole*, *dore*, *gode*, *mone*, has been changed either into *oa*, as in—*boat*, *foal*; or into *oo*, as in—*door*, *good*, *moon*.

was pronounced as an *e* feminine, and made part of a second syllable; and so, by a parity of reason, in all others, in which, as in those, it appears to have been substituted for the Saxon *a*.

Upon the same grounds we may presume, that in words terminated, according to the Saxon form, in *en*, such as the Infinitive modes and Plural numbers of Verbs, and a great variety of Adverbs and Prepositions, the *n* only was at first thrown away, and the *e*, which then became final, continued for a long time to be pronounced as well as written.

These considerations seem sufficient to make us believe, that the pronunciation of the *e* feminine is founded on the very nature of both the French and Saxon parts of our language; and, therefore, though we may not be able to trace the reasons of that pronunciation in all cases so plainly as in those which have been just mentioned, we may safely, I think, conclude with the learned Wallis (71), that what is generally considered

(71) Gram. Ling. Ang. c. i. § 2. "Originem vero hujus *e* muti, nequis miretur unde devenerit, hanc esse judico: Nempe, quod antiquitus pronunciatum fuerit, sed obscuro sono, sicut Gallorum *e* fœminum." He afterwards

as an *e* mute in our language, either at the

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adds: "Certissimum autem hujus rei indicium est ex antiquis Poetis petendum; apud quos reperitur illud *e* promiscuè vel constituere vel non constituere novam Syllabam, prout ratio carminis postulaverit." So that, according to this judicious writer, (who has confessedly searched much deeper into the formation of vocal sounds in general, and the pronunciation of the English Language in particular, than any of our other Grammarians,) I might have assumed, as certain, the point, which I have been labouring in the text (by arguments drawn from reason and analogy) to render probable.

There is much more to this purpose in Wallis, *loc. cit.* which I should transcribe, if I did not suppose that his book is in the hands of every one, who is likely to be curious upon this subject. I will only take notice of one passage which may be wrested to his disadvantage. From considering the gradual extinction of the *e* feminine in our language, and observing that the French, with whom he conversed, very often suppressed it in their common speech, he has been led to predict, that the pronunciation of it would *perhaps shortly* be disused among them as among ourselves. The prediction has certainly failed; but, notwithstanding, I will venture to say, that, at the time when it was made, it was not unworthy of Wallis's sagacity. Unluckily for its success, a number of eminent writers happened, at that very time, to be growing up in France, whose works, having since been received as standards of style, must probably fix for many centuries the antient usage of the *e* feminine in Poetry, and of course give a considerable check to the natural progress of the language. If the age of Edward III had been as favourable to Letters as that of Louis XIV; if Chaucer and his contemporary Poets had

end or in the middle of words (72), was antiently pronounced, but obscurely, like the *e* feminine of the French.

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acquired the same authority here, that Corneille, Moliere, Racine, and Boileau, have obtained in France; if their works had been published by themselves, and perpetuated in a genuine state by printing; I think it probable, that the *e* feminine would still have preserved its place in our poetical language at least, and certainly without any prejudice to the smoothness of our versification.

(72) The reasoning in the text concerning the final *e* is equally applicable to the same vowel in the middle of words. Indeed (as Wallis has observed, *loc. cit.*) "vix uspiam in medio dictionis reperitur *e* mutum, quod non ab origine fuerit finale." If therefore it was pronounced while final, it would probably continue to be pronounced notwithstanding the addition of a syllable. If it was pronounced in *swete*, *trewe*, *large*, *riche*, it would be pronounced in *swetely*, *trewely*, *largely*, *richely*. [See ver. 123 and 3219, ver. 775 and 3692, ver. 2740 and 3034, ver. 1014 and 1913.] In another very numerous set of words (French Verbals ending in *ment*) the pronunciation of this middle *e* is countenanced, not only by analogy, but also by the still subsisting practice in the French language. So Chaucer certainly pronounced the words, *jugement*, ver. 780. 807. 820. *commandement*, ver. 2871. 2931. *amendement*, ver. 4183. *pavement*, *avisement*, ver. 4505, 6. Even Spenser in the same Canto (the 8th of B. v.) uses *attonement* and *avengement*, as words of four syllables; [St. 21. 8.—30. 5.] and Wallis takes notice that the middle *e* in *commandement* was pronounced in his time.

§ XVII. The third kind of irregularity, to which an English verse is liable, is from the accents being misplaced. The restoring of Chaucer's words to their just number of syllables, by the methods which have been pointed out above, will often be of signal service in restoring his accents also to their proper places; but further, in many words, we must be cautious of concluding too hastily that Chaucer accented the same syllables that we do. On the contrary, I am persuaded that in his French words he most commonly laid his accent according to the French custom (upon the *last* syllable, or the *last but one* in words ending in *e* feminine), which, as is well known, is the very reverse of our practice. Thus in ver. 3. he uses *licoúr*, for *líquour*; ver. 11. *coráges* for *coúrages*; ver. 22. again, *coráge* for *coúrage*; ver. 37. *resón* for *réason*; ver. 77. *viáge* for *vóyage*; ver. 109, 10. *viság*e—*uságe* for *vísage*—*úsage*; ver. 140. *manére* for *mánner*; ver. 186. *laboúre* for *lábour*; ver. 204. *prelát* for *prélate*; ver. 211. *langáge* for *lánguage*; ver. 212. *mariáge* for *márriage*; ver. 216. *contrée* for *coúntry*; and so through the whole work.

In the same manner he accents the last Syllable of the Participle Present, as, ver. 885, 6. *wedding*—*coming* for *wédding*—*cóming*; ver.

903. *living* for *líving*; ver. 907, 8. *coming—crying* for *cóming—crýing*; ver. 998. *brenning* for *brénning*, &c. and as he does this in words of Saxon as well as of French growth, I should suppose that the old Participle of the present tense, ending in *and*, was originally accented upon that syllable, as it certainly continued to be by the Scottish Poets a long time after Chaucer. See Bp. Douglas, Virg. p. 18. ver. 18. Spryngánd; ver. 51. Beránd; p. 27. ver. 49. Fleánd; p. 29. ver. 10. Seánd.

These instances are all taken from the Riming syllables (where a strong accent is indispensably necessary) in order to prove beyond contradiction, that Chaucer frequently accented his words in the French manner. But if he followed this practice at the end of his verses, it is more than probable that he did the same in the middle, whenever it gave a more harmonious flow to his metre; and therefore in ver. 4. instead of *vértue*, I suppose he pronounced *vertúe*; in ver. 11. instead of *náture, natúre*; in ver. 25. instead of *avénture, aventúre*; in ver. 46. instead of *hónour, honoúr*, &c.

It may be proper however to observe, that we are not to expect from Chaucer that regularity in the disposition of his accents,

which the practice of our greatest Poets in the last and the present century has taught us to consider as essential to harmonious (73) versification. None of his masters, either French or Italian, had set him a pattern of exactness (74) in this respect; and it is rather surprising, that, without rule or example to guide him, he has so seldom failed to place

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(73) It is agreed, I believe, that, in our Heroic Metre, those Verses, considered singly, are the most harmonious, in which the Accents fall upon the even Syllables; but it has never, that I know, been defined, how far a verse may vary from this its most perfect form, and yet remain a verse. On the *tenth* (or riming) syllable a strong Accent is in all cases indispensably required; and in order to make the line tolerably harmonious, it seems necessary that at least *two more* of the *even* syllables should be accented, the *fourth* being (almost always) one of them. Milton however has not subjected his verse even to these rules; and particularly, either by negligence or design, he has frequently put an unaccented syllable in the *fourth* place. See P. L. b. iii. 36. 586. b. v. 413. 750. 874.

(74) It has been suggested above, that Chaucer probably copied his Heroic Metre from Boccace. But neither Boccace nor any of the older Italian Poets are exact in the disposition of their accents. Though their Hendecasyllable Metre is allowed by the best Critics to be derived from the Trimeter Iambic Catalectic, the perfection of it has never been determined, like that of our Heroic Metre, to consist in the conformity of its Accents to the pure Iambic measure. Quadrio, L. ii.

his accents in such a manner, as to produce the cadence best suited to the nature of his verse.

§ XVIII. I shall conclude this long and (I fear) tedious Essay, with a Grammatical and Metrical Analysis of the first eighteen lines of the Canterbury Tales. This will afford me an opportunity of illustrating at once a considerable part of that Theory, which I have ventured to propose in the preceding pages, with regard to the Language and Versification of Chaucer. The remainder I shall take occasion to explain in a few notes upon particular passages.

Dist. iii. c. iv. Part. i. Nor does the King of Navarre always dispose his Accents more agreeably to our present notions. It is probable, I think, that some fundamental differences in the three languages may have led each of the three nations to prefer a different form of constructing the same kind of verse.

THE BEGINNING OF THE CANTERBURY TALES.

I. *Whánne*[1] that Ápril with his *shoúres*[2]
sóte[3]
II. The droúghte of Márch hath *pérced*[1]
tó the *róte*,[2]
III. And *báthed*[1] évery véine in *swíche*[2]
licoúr[3],
IV. Of whíche *vertúe*[1] engéndred ís the
floúr;

I. [1] *Whanne*, Sax. Hpænne, is so seldom used as a *Dissyllable* by Chaucer, that for some time I had great doubts about the true reading of this line. I now believe that it is right, as here printed, and that the same word is to be pronounced as a *Dissyllable* in ver. 703.

But with these relikes *whanne* that he fond—

Thanne, a word of the same form, occurs more frequently as a *Dissyllable*. See ver. 12260. 12506. 12721. 13924. 15282.

[2] *Shoures*, Dis. *Plural number*. See above, p. 234.

[3] *Sote*. See ver. 5.

II. [1] *Perced*, Dis. *Participle of the Past Time*. See above, p. 234.

[2] *Rote*; root.

III. [1] *Bathed*, Dis. See II. 1.

[2] *Swiche*, such; from *Swilke*, Sax.

[3] *licoúr*, Fr. has the accent upon the *last* syllable, after the French mode.

IV. [1] *Vertúe*, Fr. may be accented in the same

V. Whan Zéphirús eke with his *sóte*[1] bréthe
VI. *Enspíred*[1] háth in évery hólt and héthe
VII. The téndre *cróppes*[1], and the *yónge*[2] sónne,
VIII. Háth in the Rám his *hálfe*[1] coúrs *yrónne*,[2]

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manner. There is another way of preserving the harmony of this verse, by making *whiche* (from *whilke*, Sax.) a *Dissyllable*. See ver. 1014. 3921. 5488. 6537. *Vertue* may then be pronounced, as it is now, with the accent on the *first;* the second syllable being incorporated with the first of *engendred*.

V. [1] *Sote, swote, swete;* sweet, Dis. See ver. 3219. 3699. 3724. 3765. 3790.

VI. [1] *Enspired*, Tris. *Part. of Past Time.*

VII. [1] *Croppes*, Dis. *Pl. N.* as *shoures*. I. [2].

[2] *Yonge*, Dis. See ver. 213. 666. 1013. 3233, 73. It is used as a *Dissyllable* in the *Ormulum*. Col. 230.

That wás god bísne fúl i wís till úre *yúnge* gúnge.

Stronge and *Longe* are pronounced in the same manner. See ver. 2375. 2640, 6. 3069. 3438. 3682.

VIII. [1] *Halfe*, or *Halve*, Dis. The original word is *Halfen*. So *Selve*, from *Selfen*, is a *Dissyllable*, ver. 2862. 4535.

[2] *Yronne;* Run. *Part. of the Past Time*, with the Saxon prepositive particle ȝe, which in the Mss. of Chaucer is universally expressed by *y*, or *i*.

IX. And *smále*[1] *foúles*[2] *máken*[3] mélodíe,
X. That *slépen*[1] *álle*[2] níght with ópen éye,
XI. So príketh *hém*[1] *natúre*[2] in *hir*[3] *coráges*[4];

IX. [1] *Smale*, Dis. See ver. 146. 2078. 6897. 10207.
[2] *Foules*, Dis. as *Shoures*. I. [2].
[3] *Maken;* make. *Plural Number of the Present Tense.* See above, p. 181.

X. [1] *Slepen*, as *Maken*. IX. [3].
[2] *Alle*, Dis. See ver. 76. 348. 536. 1854. 2102.

XI. [1] *Hem;* Them. It is constantly used so by Chaucer.
[2] *Nature* should perhaps be accented on the *last* syllable (or rather *the last but one*, supposing it a *trisyllable*), after the French manner, though in the present case the verse will be sufficiently harmonious if it be accented on the *first*. That Chaucer did often accent it after the French manner appears from ver. 8778. 9842. 11657. 11945. 12229. In the same manner he accents *Figúre*, ver. 2037. 2045. *Mesúre*, ver. 8132. 8498. *Asúre*, *Statúre*, ver. 8130, 3. *Peintúre*, ver. 11967. *Aventúre*, ver. 1188. 1237. *Creatúre*, ver. 2397. 4884. and many other words of the same form, derived from the French language.
[3] *Hir;* Their. The Possessive Pronoun of the third Person Plural is variously written, *Hir*, *Hire*, *Her*, and *Herc;* not only in different Mss. but even in the same page of good Mss. There seems to be no reason for perpetuating varieties of this kind, which can only have taken their rise from the unsettled state of our Orthography before the invention of Printing, and which now contribute more than any real alteration of the language to obscure the sense of our old Authors. In this edition therefore, *Hir* is constantly put to signify *Their;* and

XII. Than *lóngen*[1] fólk to *gón*[2] on pílgrimáges,

XIII. And *pálmer'es*[1] fór to *séken*[2] *stránge*[3] stróndes,

XIV. To *sérve*[1] *hálwes*[2] *coúthe*[3] in sóndry lóndes;

Hire to signify *Her*, whether it be the Oblique case of the Personal Pronoun *She*, or the Possessive of the same Pronoun.

[1] *Coráges*, Fr. is to be accented on the *Penultima*. See before, p. cxlvii. and also ver. 1947. 2215. To the other instances quoted in p. cxlvii. add, *Avántage*, ver. 2449. 4566. *Brocáge*, 3375. *Foráge*, ver. 3166. *Lináge*, ver. 4270. 5419. *Serváge*, ver. 1948. 4788. *Costáge*, ver. 5831. *Paráge*, ver. 5832.

XII. [1] *Longen*, as *Maken*. IX. [3].

[2] *Gon*, Infinitive Mode of *Go*, terminated in *n* according to the Saxon form. See above, p. 181.

XIII. [1] *Pálmer'es*, Dis. the *e* of the termination being cut out by Syncope, as it generally is in *Plural Nouns* of *three* Syllables, accented upon the *first*, and in the *Past Tenses* and their *Participles of Verbs*, of the same description, ending in *ed*. The reason seems to be, that, where the Accent is placed so early, we cannot pronounce the final syllables fully, without laying more stress upon them, than they can properly bear.

[2] *Seken*, as *Gon*. XII. [2].

[3] *Strange*, Dis. Fr. See before, p. 236.

XIV. [1] *Serve*, Dis. from *Serven*, the *n* being thrown away before *h*. See above, p. 181 and 239.

[2] *Halwes*, Sax. ꝑalȝeꝛ. The Saxon ȝ is changed into *w*, as in *sorwe*, *morwe*, and some others; though it gene-

XV. And spécially[1] from évery *shíres*[1] énde
XVI. Of *Englelónd*[1] to Cánterbúry *they wénde*,[2]
XVII. The hóly blísful mártyr fór to séke,
XVIII. That *hém*[1] hath *hólpen*,[2] whán that théy were *séke*.[3]

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rally passes into *y*. The derivatives from this same word afford us instances of both forms; *Holyness*, *Holyday* All-*Hallows*-day.

[3] *Couthe;* known, *The Participle of the Past Time* from *Connen*, to know. See before, n. 35.

XV. [1] *Shires*, Dis. *Genitive Case Sing.* See before, p. 234.

XVI. [1] *Englelond*, Trisyllable, from the Saxon Engla-lanꝺa.

[2] The last foot consists of three Syllables.

—to Cán | terbúr | y they wénde.

See above, n. 66.

XVIII. [1] *Hem;* Them. See XI. [1].

[2] *Holpen*, the *Participle of the Past Time* from the Irregular Verb *Help*. See before, n. 34.

[3] *Seke;* Sick. As Chaucer usually writes this word *Sike*, we may suppose that in this instance he has altered the Orthography in order to make the Rime more exact; a liberty, with which he sometimes indulges himself, though much more sparingly than his contemporary Poets. The Saxon writers afford authorities to justify either method of spelling, as they use both Seoca and Sioca.

I have hitherto considered these verses as consisting of

ten syllables only; but it is impossible not to observe, that, according to the rules of pronunciation established above, all of them, except the 3d and 4th, consist really of *eleven* syllables. This is evident at first sight in ver. 11, 12, 13, 14, and might be shewn as clearly, by authority or analogy, in the others; but as the *eleventh* syllable, in our versification, being unaccented, may always, I apprehend, be absent or present without prejudice to the metre, there does not seem to be any necessity for pointing it out in every particular instance.

AN INTRODUCTORY DISCOURSE TO THE CANTERBURY TALES

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AN INTRODUCTORY DISCOURSE TO THE CANTERBURY TALES.

§ I.

THE Dramatic form, which Boccace gave to his collection of Tales, or Novels, about the middle of the fourteenth Century (1), must be allowed to have been a capital improvement of that species of amusing composition. The Decameron in that respect,

(1) The Action of the Decameron being supposed in 1384, the year of the great pestilence, it is probable that Boccace did not set about his work till after that period. How soon he completed it is uncertain. It should seem from the introduction to the Fourth Day, that a part (containing perhaps the three first Days) was published separately; for in that Introduction he takes pains to answer the censures, which had been passed upon him by several persons, who had read his Novels. One of the censures is, "that it did not become *his age* to write for the amusement of women, &c." In his answer he seems to allow the fact, that he was rather an old fellow, but endeavours to justify himself by the examples of "Guido Cavalcanti et Dante Alighieri *gia vecchi* et

not to mention many others, has the same advantage over the *Cento Novelle antiche*, which are supposed to have preceded it in point of time, that a regular comedy will necessarily have over an equal number of single unconnected Scenes. Perhaps indeed there would be no great harm, if the Critics would permit us to consider the Decameron, and other compositions of that kind, in the light of Comedies not intended for the stage: at least we may venture to assume, that the closer any such composition shall copy the most essential forms of Comedy, the more natural and defined the Plan shall be; the more the Characters shall be diversified; the

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Messer Cino da Pistoia *vecchissimo*." It appears from a passage in the *Laberinto d' Amore* [Ed. 1723. t. iii. p. 24.], that Boccace considered himself as an elderly man, when he was a little turned of forty; and therefore the publication of the first part of the Decameron may very well have been, as Salviati has fixed it, [V. Manni, Ist. del Decam. p. 144.] in 1353, when Boccace was just forty years of age. If we consider the nature of the work, and that the Author, in his Conclusion, calls it repeatedly, "*lunga fatica*," and says, that "*molto tempo*" had passed between the commencement and the completion of it, we can hardly, I think, suppose that it was finished in less than ten years; which will bring the publication of the entire collection of Novels, as we now have it, down to 1358.

more the Tales shall be suited to the Characters; so much the more conspicuous will be the skill of the Writer, and his work approach the nearer to perfection.

§ II. The Canterbury Tales are a work of the same nature with the Decameron, and were, in all probability, composed in imitation of it, though upon a different and, in my opinion, an improved plan. It would be easy to shew, that, in the several points abovementioned, Chaucer has either been more judicious, or more fortunate, than his master Boccace: but, waving for the present (2) that

(2) I will only just mention what appear to me to be fundamental defects in the Decameron. In the first place, the *Action* is indefinite; not limited by its own nature, but merely by the will of the Author. It might, if he had been so pleased, have as well comprehended twenty, or a hundred days, as ten; and therefore, though some frivolous reasons are assigned for the return of the Company to Florence, we see too plainly, that the true reason was, that the budget of Novels was exhausted. Not to mention, that every day after the first may properly be considered as containing a new action, or, what is worse, a repetition of the Action of the former day. The second defect is in the *Characters*, which are so nearly resembling to each other, in age, rank, and even natural disposition, that, if they had been strictly supported, their conversation must have been incapable of that variety which is necessary to carry the reader through so long a work. The third defect has arisen from the

disquisition, I shall proceed to the immediate object of this Discourse, which is, in the first place, to lay before the Reader the general plan of the Canterbury Tales, as it appears to have been originally designed by Chaucer; and, secondly, to give a particular review of the several parts of that work, which are come down to us, as they are published in this edition.

§ III. The general plan of the Canterbury Tales may be learned in a great measure from the Prologue, which Chaucer himself has prefixed to them. He supposes there, that a company of Pilgrims going to Canterbury assemble at an Inn in Southwark, and agree, that, for their common amusement on the road, each of them shall tell at least one Tale in going to Canterbury, and another in coming back from thence; and that he, who shall tell the best Tales, shall be treated by the rest with a supper upon their return to the same Inn. This is shortly the *Fable*. The *Characters* of the Pilgrims are as various

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author's attempt to remedy the second. In order to diversify and enliven his narrations, he has made a circle of virtuous ladies and polite gentlemen hear and relate in their turns a number of stories, which cannot, with any degree of probability, be supposed to have been suffered in such an assembly.

as, at that time, could be found in the several departments of *middle* life; that is, in fact, as various as could, with any probability, be brought together, so as to form one company; the highest and the lowest ranks of society being necessarily excluded. It appears further, that the design of Chaucer was not barely to recite the Tales told by the Pilgrims, but also to describe their journey, *And all the remenant of* their *pilgrimage* [ver. 726.]; including, probably, their adventures at Canterbury as well as upon the road. If we add, that the Tales, besides being nicely adapted to the Characters of their respective Relaters, were intended to be connected together by suitable introductions, and interspersed with diverting episodes; and that the greatest part of them was to have been executed in Verse; we shall have a tolerable idea of the extent and difficulty of the whole undertaking: and admiring, as we must, the vigour of that genius, which in an advanced age (3) could

(3) Chaucer was born in 1328, and it is most probable, I think, that he did not begin his Canterbury Tales before 1382, at the earliest. My reason is this. The Queen, who is mentioned in the *Legende of Good Women*, ver. 496. was certainly Anne of Bohemia, the first Queen of Richard II. She was not married to Richard, till the beginning of 1382, so that the Legende

begin so vast a work, we shall rather lament than be surprised that it has been left imperfect.

§ IV. In truth, if we compare those parts of the Canterbury Tales, of which we are in possession, with the sketch which has been just given of the intended whole, it will be found that more than one half is wanting. The Prologue we have, perhaps nearly complete, and the greatest part of the journey to Canterbury; but not a word of the transactions at Canterbury, or of the journey homeward, or of the Epilogue, which, we may suppose, was to have concluded the work, with an account of the Prize-supper and the

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cannot possibly be supposed of an earlier date than that year. In the Legende [ver. 329—332. ver. 417—430.] Chaucer has enumerated, I believe, all the considerable works which he had then composed. It was to his purpose not to omit any. He not only does not mention the Canterbury Tales, but he expressly names *the story of Palamon and Arcite* and *the Life of Saint Cecilia*, both which now make part of them, as separate compositions. I am persuaded, therefore, that in 1382 the work of the Canterbury Tales was not begun; and if we look further and consider the troubles in which Chaucer was involved, for the five or six following years, by his connexions with John of Northampton, we can hardly suppose that it was much advanced before 1389, the sixty-first year of the author's age.

separation of the company. Even in that part which we have of the journey to Canterbury, it will be necessary, in the following Review, to take notice of certain defects and inconsistencies, which can only be accounted for upon the supposition, that the work was never finished by the Author.

§ V. Having thus stated the general Plan of the Canterbury Tales, I shall now, according to my promise, enter upon a particular Review of those parts of them, which are published in this edition, beginning with THE PROLOGUE.

It seems to have been the intention of Chaucer, in the first lines of the Prologue, to mark with some exactness the *time* of his supposed pilgrimage; but unluckily the two circumstances of his description, which were most likely to answer that purpose, are each of them irreconcileable to the other. When he tells us, that "the shoures of April had *perced to the rote* the drought of March" [ver. 1, 2.] we must suppose, in order to allow due time for such an operation, that April was far advanced; while on the other hand the place of the Sun, "having just run half his course in the Ram" [ver. 7, 8.], restrains us to some day in the very latter end of March; as the Vernal Equinox, in the age

of Chaucer, according to his own treatise on the Astrolabe (4), was computed to happen on the twelfth of March. This difficulty may, and I think, should, be removed by reading in ver. 8, *the Bull*, instead of *the Ram* (5). All the parts of this description will then be consistent with themselves, and with another passage [ver. 4425.], where, in the best Mss. *the eighte and twenty day* of April is named as the day of the journey to Canterbury.

We will suppose therefore, that the preceding day, the seven and twentieth of April,

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(4) In this particular the Editions agree with the Mss. but in general, the printed text of this Treatise is so monstrously incorrect, that it cannot be cited with any safety.

(5) This correction may seem to be authorised, in some measure, by Lidgate, who begins his continuation of the Canterbury Tales in this manner.

> "Whan bright Phebus *passed was the Ram*
> Midde of Aprill, and into the Bull came."

But the truth is, that Dan John wrote for the most part in a great hurry, and consequently without much accuracy. In the account which he proceeds to give of Chaucer's Tales, he not only confounds the circumstances of description of the Sompnour and Pardoner, but he speaks of the latter as—

> Telling a tale to anger with the Frere.
> Storie of Thebes, ver. 32—5.

was the day on which the company assembled at the Tabard. In what year this happened, Chaucer has not thought fit to inform us (6). Either he did not think it necessary to fix that point at all; or perhaps he postponed it, till the completion of his work should enable him to assign such a date to his Fable, as should be consistent with all the historical circumstances, which he might take occasion to introduce into it.

§ VI. A second point, intended to be defined in the Prologue, is the *number of the company;* and this too has its difficulties.

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(6) It is clear that, whether the pilgrimage were real or imaginary, Chaucer, as a Poet, had a right to suppose it to have happened at the time which he thought best. He was only to take care, when the time was once fixed, that no circumstances were admitted into his Poem, which might clash, or be inconsistent with the date of it. When no particular date is assigned to a fable of this sort, we must naturally imagine that the date of the fable coincides with that of the composition; and accordingly, if we examine the Canterbury Tales, we shall not find any circumstances which do not perfectly suit with that period, which has been stated in a former note as the probable time of Chaucer's beginning to compose them. The latest historical fact mentioned in them is the Insurrection of Jakke Straw [ver. 15400.], which happened in 1381; [this passage should be compared with the n. on ver. 14709.], and the earliest, in which any person of the Drama is concerned, is the siege of Algezir [ver.

They are said in ver. 24. to have been *nine and twenty*, but it is not clear whether Chaucer himself is included in that number. They might therefore, according to that passage, be *thirty*; but if we reckon the several characters, as they are enumerated in the Prologue, we shall find them *one and thirty*;

56, 7], which began in August 1342, and ended, with the taking of the city, in March 1344. Mariana, l. xvi. c. x. xi. The Knight therefore may very well be supposed to have been at that siege, and also upon a Pilgrimage to Canterbury in 1383, or thereabouts.

They who are disposed to believe the pilgrimage to have been real, and to have happened in 1383, may support their opinion by the following inscription, which is still to be read upon the Inn, now called the Talbot, in Southwark. "This is the Inn where Sir Jeffrey Chaucer and the twenty-nine Pilgrims lodged in their journey to Canterbury, Anno 1383." Though the present inscription is evidently of a very recent date, we might suppose it to have been propagated to us by a succession of faithful transcripts from the very time; but unluckily there is too good reason to be assured, that the first inscription of this sort was not earlier than the last century. Mr. Speght, who appears to have been inquisitive concerning this Inn in 1597, has left us this account of it in his Glossary, v. TABARD. "A jaquet, or slevelesse coate, worne in times past by Noblemen in the warres, but now onely by Heraults, and is called theyre coate of Armes in servise. It is the signe of an Inne in Southwarke by London, within the which was the lodging of the Abbot of Hyde by Winchester. This was the Hostelry where *Chaucer* and the other pilgrims mett together, and, with

1. a Knight; 2. a Squier; 3. a Yeman; 4. a Prioresse; 5. an other Nonne; 6. 7. 8. Three Preestes; 9. a Monk; 10. a Frere; 11. a Marchant; 12. a Clerk of Oxenforde; 13. a Sergeant of the Lawe; 14. a Frankelein; 15. an Haberdasher; 16. a Carpenter; 17. a Webbe; 18. a Deyer; 19. a Tapiser; 20. a

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Henry Baily their hoste, accorded about the manner of their journey to Canterbury. And whereas through time it hath bin much decaied, it is now by Master *J. Preston*, with the Abbot's house thereto adjoyned, newly repaired, and with convenient roomes much encreased, for the receipt of many guests."

If any inscription of this kind had then been there, he would hardly have omitted to mention it; and therefore I am persuaded it has been put up since his time, and most probably when the sign was changed from the Tabard to the Talbot, in order to preserve the antient glory of the House notwithstanding its new title. Whoever furnished the date, must be allowed to have at least invented plausibly.

While I am upon the subject of this famous Hostelry, I will just add, that it was probably parcel of two tenements which appear to have been conveyed by William de Ludegarsale to the Abbot, &c. *de Hydá juxta Winton*, in 1306, and which are described, in a former conveyance there recited, to extend in length, "a communi fossato de Suthwerke versus Orientem, usque Regiam viam de Suthwerke versus Occidentem." Registrum de Hyde, Ms. Harl. 1761. fol. 166—173. If we should ever be so happy as to recover the account-books of the Abbey of Hyde, we may possibly learn what rent *Harry Bailly* paid for his inn, and many other important particulars.

Coke; 21. a Shipman; 22. a Doctour of Physike; 23. a Wif of Bathe; 24. a Persone; 25. a Plowman; 26. a Reve; 27. a Miller; 28. a Sompnour; 29. a Pardoner; 30. a Manciple; 31. Chaucer himself. It must be observed however that in this list there is one very suspicious article, which is that of the *three Preestes*. As it appears evidently to have been the design of Chaucer to compose his company of individuals of different ranks, in order to produce a greater variety of distinct characters, we can hardly conceive that he would, in this single instance, introduce *three*, of the same profession, without any discriminating circumstances whatever; and in fact, when the Nonnes Preest is called upon to tell his tale, [ver. 14814.] he is accosted by the Host in a manner, which will not permit us to suppose that two others of the same denomination were present. This must be allowed to be a strong objection to the genuineness of that article of the *three* Preestes; but it is not the only one. All the other Characters are particularly described, and most of them very much at large, whereas the whole that is said of the *other Nonne* and the *three Preestes* is contained in these two lines [ver. 163, 4.] at the end of the Prioresses character:

Another Nonne also with hire had she,
That was hire Chapellein, and Preestes thre.

Where it is also observable, that the single circumstance of description is false; for no Nonne could be a Chaplain. The chief duty of a Chaplain was to say Mass, and to hear Confession, neither of which offices could regularly be performed by a Nonne, or by any woman (7).

It should seem therefore, that we have sufficient ground to reject these two lines, or at least the second, as an interpolation (8); by

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(7) It appears that some Abbesses did at one time attempt to hear the Confessions of their Nuns, and to exercise some other smaller parts of the clerical function: but this practice, I apprehend, was soon stopped by Gregory IX. who has forbidden it in the strongest terms. Decretal. l. v. tit. 38. c. x. Nova quædam nostris sunt auribus intimata, quod Abbatissæ moniales proprias benedicunt; *ipsarum quoque confessiones in criminibus audiunt*, et legentes Evangelium præsumunt publice prædicare: Cum igitur id absonum sit et pariter absurdum, Mandamus quatenus ne id de cætero fiat cunctis firmiter inhibere. If these presumptuous Abbesses had ventured to say Mass, His Holiness would doubtless have thundered still louder against them.

(8) My notion, I cannot call it opinion, of the matter is this; that the first of these lines did really begin the character of the Nonne, which Chaucer had originally inserted in this place together with that of the Nonnes Preest, at as great length as the other characters, but

which means we shall get rid of *two* of the Preestes, and the detail of the characters will agree with the gross number in ver. 24, Chaucer himself being included among the *nine and twenty*. As Novellists generally delight in even numbers, it is not improbable that the Host was intended to be the thirtieth. Though not under the same obligation with the other Pilgrims, he might nevertheless tell his Tale among them as a Volunteer.

§ VII. This leads me, in the third place, to examine what the *agreement* was, which the Pilgrims entered into, at the suggestion of the Host, with respect to the number of Tales that each person was to tell. The pro-

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that they were both afterwards expunged, either by himself, or, more probably, by those who published his work after his death, for reasons of nearly the same kind with those which occasioned the suppression of the latter part of the Cokes Tale. I suspect our Bard had been rather too gay in his description of these two Religious persons. See a little concerning the Preest, ver. 15453—65.

If it should be thought improbable that an interpolator would insert any thing so absurd and contradictory to the Author's plan as the second line, I beg leave to suggest, that it is still more improbable that such a line should have come from the Author himself; and further, I think I can promise, in the course of the following work, to point out several other undoubted interpolations, which are to the full as absurd as the subject of our present discussion.

posal of the Host stands thus, with very little variation, in all the Mss.

This is the point—says he, ver. 792—5.

> That eche of you, to shorten with youre way,
> In this viage shal tellen tales tway,
> To Canterbury ward, I mene it so,
> And homeward he shal tellen other two—

From this passage we should certainly conclude, that each of them was to tell *two tales* in the journey to Canterbury, and *two more* in the journey homeward: but all the other passages, in which mention is made of this agreement, would rather lead us to believe, that they were to tell only *one* Tale in each journey; and the Prologue to the Parsons Tale strongly confirms this latter supposition. The Host says there, [ver. 17327.]

> —"Now lacketh us no tales mo than on"—

and calling upon the Parson to tell this one tale, which was wanting, he says to him, [ver. 17335.]

> —"ne breke thou not our play,
> For every man, save thou, hath told his tale."

The Parson therefore had not told any tale before, and only one tale was expected from him (and consequently from each of the others) upon that journey.

It is true, that a very slight alteration of the passage first cited would reconcile that too to this hypothesis. If it were written—

> That eche of you, to shorten with youre way,
> In this viage shal tellen tales tway;
> To Canterbury ward, I mene it, *o*,
> And homeward he shal tell another *to*—

the original proposition of the Host would perfectly agree with what appears to have been the subsequent practice. However, I cannot venture to propose such an alteration of the text, in opposition to so many Mss. some of them of the best note; and therefore the Reader, if he is so pleased, may consider this as one of those inconsistencies, hinted at above, which prove too plainly that the author had not finished his work.

§ VIII. The remainder of the Prologue is employed in describing the *Characters* of the Pilgrims, and their first setting out upon their journey. The little that it may be necessary to say in illustration of some of the Characters I shall reserve for the Notes. The circumstances of their setting out are related succinctly and naturally; and the contrivance of appointing the Knight *by lot* to tell the first tale is a happy one, as it affords the Author the opportunity of giving his work a

splendid opening, and at the same time does not infringe that apparent equality, upon which the freedom of discourse and consequently the ease and good humour of every society so entirely depends. The general satisfaction, which this appointment is said to give to the company, puts us in mind of a similar gratification to the secret wishes of the Grecian army, when the lot of fighting with Hector falls to Ajax; though there is not the least probability that Chaucer had ever read the Iliad, even in a translation.

§ IX. The Knightes Tale, or at least a Poem upon the same subject, was originally composed by Chaucer, as a separate work. As such it is mentioned by him, among some of his other works, in the *Legende of gode women*, [ver. 420, l.] under the title of—"al the love of Palamon and Arcite of Thebes, though the storie is knowen lite—;" and the last words seem to imply that it had not made itself very popular. It is not impossible that at first it was a mere translation of the Theseida of Boccace, and that its present form was given it, when Chaucer determined to assign it the first place among his Canterbury tales. As the Theseida, upon which this tale is entirely founded, is very rarely to

be met with (9), it may be not unpleasing to the Reader to see here a short summary of it, which will shew with what skill Chaucer has proceeded in reducing a poem of about ten thousand lines to a little more than two

(9) The letter, which Boccace sent to the Fiammetta with this poem, is dated *di Napoli a* 15. *d'Aprile* 1341. Lettere di xiii. Uomini Illust. Ven. 1564. I believe that date is a true one, and it is remarkable, as being the very year and month, in which Petrarch received the Laurel at Rome. See Petr. Ep. Famil. XII. 12. The long friendship, which subsisted between these two extraordinary men, must probably have commenced in the preceding winter, when Petrarch came to Naples in order to be examined by King Robert, previously to his going to Rome. Boccace seems to have been present at some of the conversations between him and the King. Geneal. Deor. l. xiv. c. xxii.]

The first Edition of the Theseida, according to Quadrio [t. vi. p. 462.], was without date, and under the mistaken title of *Amazonide*, which might have been proper enough for the first book. It was soon after however reprinted, with its true title, at Ferrara, in 1475. fol. Dr. Askew was so obliging as to lend me the only copy of this edition, which I have ever heard of, in England. The Reverend Mr. Crofts has a later edition in 4to. printed at Venice, in 1528, but in that the poem has been *riveduto e emendato*, that is, in plain English, modernized. I cannot help suspecting that Salvini, who has inveighed with great bitterness against the corruptions of the printed Theseida, [Manni, Ist. del. Decam. p. 52.] had only examined this last edition; for I observe that a Stanza which he has quoted (from some Ms. as I suppose) is not

thousand, without omitting any material circumstance.

The Theseida is distributed into twelve Books or Cantoes.

B. I. contains the war of Theseus with the

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near so correct as it is in the edition of 1475. As this Stanza contains Boccace's own account of the intention of his Poem, I shall transcribe it here from that edition. It is the beginning of his conclusion.

Poi che le Muse nude cominciaro
Nel conspeto de gli omeni ad andare,
Gia fur de quelli che [gia] le exercitaro
Con bello stilo in *honesto* parlare,
E altri in *amoroso* lo operaro;
Ma tu, o libro, primo al lor cantare
Di *Marte* fai gli affanni sostenuti,
Nel vulgar latino mai piu non veduti.

This plainly alludes to a passage in Dante, de Vulgari Eloquentia, l. ii. c. ii. where, after having pointed out the three great subjects of Poetry, viz. *Arma, Amorem, et Rectitudinem*, (War, Love, and Morality,) and enumerated the illustrious writers upon each, he adds: *Arma vero nullum Italum adhuc invenio poetasse.* Boccace therefore apparently prides himself upon having supplied the defect remarked by Dante, and upon being the first who taught the Italian Muses to sing of *Arms*.

Besides other variations for the worse, the fifth line in Salvini's copy is written thus;

Ed altri in *dolci modi* l'operaro—

by which means the allusion to Dante is rendered incomplete.

Amazons; their submission to him; and his marriage with Hippolyta.

B. II. Theseus, having spent two years in Scythia, is reproached by Perithous in a vision, and immediately returns to Athens with Hippolyta and her sister Emilia. He enters the city in triumph; finds the Grecian Ladies in the temple of Clemenzia; marches to Thebes; kills Creon, &c. and brings home Palemone and Arcita, who are

Damnati—ad eterna presone.

B. III. Emilia, walking in a garden and singing, is heard and seen first by Arcita (10), who calls Palemone. They are both equally enamoured of her, but without any jealousy or rivalship. Emilia is supposed to see them

(10) In describing the commencement of this Amour, which is to be the subject of the remainder of the poem, Chaucer has entirely departed from his author in three principal circumstances, and, I think, in each with very good reason. 1. By supposing Emilia to be seen first by Palamon, he gives him an advantage over his rival which makes the catastrophe more consonant to poetical justice. 2. The picture which Boccace has exhibited of two young princes, violently enamoured of the same object, without jealousy or rivalship, if not absolutely unnatural, is certainly very insipid and unpoetical. 3. As no consequence is to follow from their being seen by Emilia at this time, it is better, I think, to suppose, as Chaucer has done, that they are not seen by her.

at the window, and to be not displeased with their admiration.—Arcita is released at the request of Perithous; takes his leave of Palemone, with embraces, &c.

B. IV. Arcita, having changed his name to *Pentheo*, goes into the service of Menelaus at Mycenæ, and afterwards of Peleus at Ægina. From thence he returns to Athens and becomes a favourite servant of Theseus, being known to Emilia, though to nobody else; till after some time he is overheard making his complaint in a wood, to which he usually resorted for that purpose, by Pamphilo, a servant of Palemone.

B. V. Upon the report of Pamphilo, Palemone *begins* to be jealous of Arcita, and is desirous to get out of prison in order to fight with him. This he accomplishes with the assistance of Pamphilo, by changing clothes with Alimeto, a Physician. He goes armed to the wood in quest of Arcita, whom he finds sleeping. At first they are very civil and friendly to each other (11). Then Pale-

(11) En sieme se fer festa di bon core,
E li loro accidenti si narraro. Thes. l. v.

This is surely too much in the style of Romance. Chaucer has made them converse more naturally. He has also judiciously avoided to copy Boccace in representing Arcite as more moderate than his rival.

mone calls upon Arcita to renounce his pretensions to Emilia, or to fight with him. After many long expostulations on the part of Arcita, they fight, and are discovered first by Emilia, who sends for Theseus. When he finds who they are, and the cause of their difference, he forgives them, and proposes the method of deciding their claim to Emilia by a combat of an hundred to each side, to which they gladly agree.

B. VI. Palemone and Arcita live splendidly at Athens, and send out messengers to summon their friends, who arrive; and the principal of them are severally described, viz. Lycurgus, Peleus, Phocus, Telamon, &c. Agamemnon, Menelaus, Castor, and Pollux, &c. Nestor, Evander, Perithous, Ulysses, Diomedes, Pygmalion, Minos, &c. with a great display of ancient history and mythology.

B. VII. Theseus declares the laws of the combat, and the two parties of an hundred on each side are formed. The day before the combat, Arcita, after having visited the temples of all the Gods, makes a formal prayer to Mars. The Prayer, *being personified* (12), is said to go and find Mars in his

(12) Era alor forsi Marte in exercitio
Di chiara far la parte ruginosa

temple in Thrace, which is described; and Mars, upon understanding the message, causes favourable signs to be given to Arcita. In the same manner Palemone closes his religious observances with a prayer to Venus. His Prayer, *being also personified*, sets out for the temple of Venus on Mount Citherone, which is also described; and the petition is

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Del grande suo e horribile hospitio,
Quando de Arcita LA ORATION pietosa
Pervenne li per fare il dato offitio,
Tutta ne lo aspecto lagrimosa;
La qual divene di spavento muta,
Come di Marte hebbe laca veduta. Thes. l. vii.

As this contrivance, of *personifying* the Prayers and sending them to the several deities, is only in order to introduce a description of the respective temples, it will be allowed, I believe, that Chaucer has attained the same end by a more natural fiction. It is very probable that Boccace caught the idea of making the Prayers *persons* from Homer, with whose works he was better acquainted than most of his contemporaries in this part of the world; and there can be no doubt, I suppose, that Chaucer's imagination, in the expedient which he has substituted, was assisted by the occasional edifices which he had himself seen erected for the decoration of Turnaments.

The combat, which follows, having no foundation in ancient history or manners, it is no wonder that both poets should have admitted a number of incongruous circumstances into their description of it. The great advantage which Chaucer has over his original in this respect is, that he is much shorter. When we have read

granted. Then the sacrifice of Emilia to Diana is described; her prayer; the appearance of the Goddess; and the signs of the two fires.—In the morning they proceed to the Theatre with their respective troops, and prepare for the action. Arcita puts up a private prayer to Emilia, and harangues his troop publickly; and Palemone does the same.

B. VIII. Contains a description of the battle, in which Palemone is taken prisoner.

B. IX. The horse of Arcita, being frighted by a Fury, sent from hell at the desire of Venus, throws him. However, he is carried to Athens in a triumphal chariot with Emilia by his side; is put to bed dangerously ill; and there by his own desire espouses Emilia.

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in the Theseida a long and learned catalogue of all the heroes of Antiquity brought together upon this occasion, we are only the more surprised to see Theseus, in such an assembly, conferring the honour of Knighthood upon the two Theban chieftains.

E senza stare con non piccolo honore
Cinse le spade a li dui scudieri,
E ad Arcita Poluce e Castore
Calciaro d'oro li sproni e volontieri,
E Diomede e Ulixe di cuore
Calzati a Palemone, e cavalieri
Ambedui furono alora novelli
Li inamorati Theban damigieli. Thes. l. vii.

B. X. The funeral of the persons killed in the combat. Arcita, being given over by his Physicians, makes his will, in discourse with Theseus, and desires that Palemone may inherit all his possessions and also Emilia. He then takes leave of Palemone and Emilia, to whom he repeats the same request. Their lamentations. Arcita orders a sacrifice to Mercury, which Palemone performs for him, and dies.

B. XI. Opens with the passage of Arcita's soul to heaven, imitated from the beginning of the 9th Book of Lucan. The funeral of Arcita. Description of the wood felled takes up six Stanzas. Palemone builds a temple in honour of him, in which his whole history is painted. The description of this painting is an abridgement of the preceding part of the Poem.

B. XII. Theseus proposes to carry into execution Arcita's will by the marriage of Palemone and Emilia. This they both decline for some time in formal speeches, but at last are persuaded and married. The Kings, &c. take their leave, and Palemone remains—" in gioia e in diporto con la sua dona nobile e cortese."

From this sketch of the Theseida it is evident enough that Chaucer was obliged to

Boccace (13) for the Plan and principal incidents of the KNIGHTES TALE; and in the notes upon that tale I shall point out some passages, out of many more, which are literal translations from the Italian.

§ X. When the *Knight* has finished his Tale, the *Host* with great propriety calls upon the *Monk*, as the next in rank among the men, to tell the next Tale; but, as it seems to have been the intention of Chaucer to avail himself of the variety of his Characters, in order to distribute alternate successions of Serious and Comic, in nearly equal proportions, throughout his work, he has contrived, that the *Hostes* arrangement shall be set aside by the intrusion of the

(13) To whom Boccace was obliged is a more difficult subject of enquiry. That the Story was of his own invention, I think is scarcely credible. He speaks of it himself as *very ancient*. [Lett. alla Fiammetta. *Biblioth. Smith. App.* p. cxli.] Trovata una antichissima Storia, e al più delle genti non manifesta, in latino volgare, acciocchè più dilettasse e massimamente a voi, che già con sommo titolo le mie rime esaltaste, ho ridotta. He then tells her, that she will observe that what is related under the name of *one* of the two lovers and of Emilia, is very similar to what had actually passed between herself and him; and adds—Se forse alcune cose soperchie vi fossono, il voler bene coprire ciò che non era onesto manifestare, da noi due in fuori, e'l volere la storia seguire, ne sono cagione. I am well aware however that decla-

dronken Miller, whose tale is such as might be expected from his character and condition, a complete contrast to the *Knightes*.

§ XI. I have not been able to discover from whence the story of the Millers Tale is taken; so that for the present I must give Chaucer credit for it as his own invention, though in general he seems to have built his Tales, both serious and comic, upon stories, which he found ready made. The great difference is, that in his serious pieces he often follows his author with the servility of a mere translator, and in consequence his narration is jejune and constrained; whereas in the comic, he is generally satisfied with borrowing a slight hint of his subject, which

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rations of this kind, prefixed to fabulous works, are not much to be depended upon. The wildest of the French Romances are commonly said by the Authors to be translated from some old *Latin* Chronicle at St. Denys. And certainly the Story of Palemone and Arcita, as related by Boccace, could not be *very ancient*. If it was of Greek original, as I rather suspect, it must have been thrown into its present form, after the Norman Princes had introduced the manners of Chivalry into their dominions in Sicily and Italy.

The Poem in modern Greek political verses *De nuptiis Thesei et Emiliæ*, printed at Venice in 1529, is a mere translation of the *Theseida*. The Author has even translated the prefatory epistle addressed by Boccace to the Fiammetta.

he varies, enlarges, and embellishes at pleasure, and gives the whole the air and colour of an original; a sure sign, that his genius rather led him to compositions of the latter kind.

§ XII. The next tale is told by the Reve (who is represented above, ver. 589. as "a cholerick man") in revenge of the *Miller's* tale. It has been generally said to be borrowed from the *Decameron*, D. ix. N. 6. but I rather think that both Boccace and Chaucer, in this instance, have taken whatever they have in common from an old *Fabliau* or *Conte*, of an anonymous French rimer, *De Gombert et des deux Clers*. The Reader may easily satisfy himself upon this head, by casting his eye upon the French *Fabliau*, which has lately been printed with several others from Mss. in France. See *Fabliaux et Contes*, Paris, 1756. t. ii. p. 115—124.

§ XIII. The Cokes Tale is imperfect in all the Mss. which I have had an opportunity of examining. In Ms. A. it seems to have been entirely omitted; and indeed I cannot help suspecting, that it was intended to be omitted, at least in this place, as in the *Manciples Prologue*, when the *Coke* is called upon to tell a tale, there is no intimation of his

having told one before. Perhaps our Author might think, that three tales of *harlotrie*, as he calls it, together would be too much. However, as it is sufficiently certain, that the *Cokes* Prologue and the beginning of his Tale are genuine compositions, they have their usual place in this Edition. There was not the same reason for inserting the story of GAMELYN, which in some Mss. is annexed to the *Cokes Tale*. It is not to be found in any of the Mss. of the first authority; and the manner, style, and versification, all prove it to have been the work of an author much inferior to Chaucer. I did not therefore think myself warranted to publish it a second time among the Canterbury Tales, though as a Relique of our antient Poetry, and the foundation perhaps, of Shakespeare's *As you like it*, I could have wished to see it more accurately printed, than it is in the only edition which we have of it.

§ XIV. In the PROLOGUE TO THE MAN OF LAWES TALE Chaucer recalls our attention to the Action, if I may so call it, of his Drama, the journey of the Pilgrims. They had set out soon after *the day began to spring*, ver. 824 and f. When the *Reve* was beginning to tell his tale, they were in the neighbourhood of Deptford and Greenwich, and it was

half way prime; that is, I suppose, *half way* past *prime*, about half hour after seven A. M. [ver. 3904, 5.]. How much further they were advanced upon their road at this time is not said; but the hour of the day is pointed out to us by two circumstances. We are first told [ver. 4422, 3.], that

> —"the Sonne
> The ark of his artificial day had ronne
> The fourthe part and half an hour and more;"—

and secondly [ver. 4432.], that he was "five and forty degrees high;" and this last circumstance is so confirmed by the mention of a corresponding phænomenon that it is impossible to suspect any error in the number. The *equality in length* of shadows to their projecting bodies can only happen, when the Sun is at the height of *five and forty* degrees. Unfortunately however this description, though seemingly intended to be so accurate, will neither enable us to conclude with the Mss. that it was "*ten of the clock*," nor to fix upon any other hour; as the two circumstances just mentioned are not found to coincide in any part of the twenty-eighth, or of any other, day of April (14) in this climate.

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(14) The twenty-eighth day of April, in the time of Chaucer, answering to our 6th or 7th of May, the Sun,

All that we can conclude with certainty is, that it was *not past* ten of the clock.

The compliments which Chaucer has introduced upon his own writings are modest enough, and quite unexceptionable; but if the reflection [ver. 4497. and f.] upon those who relate such stories as that of *Canace*, or of *Apollonius Tyrius*, was levelled at Gower, as I very much suspect, it will be difficult to reconcile such an attack to our notions of the strict friendship, which is generally supposed to have subsisted between the two bards (15).

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in the latitude of London, rose about half hour after four, and the length of the artificial day was a little more than fifteen hours. *A fourth part* of 15 hours ($=3^h.\ 45^m.$) *and half an hour and more*—may be fairly computed to make together 4 hours $\frac{1}{2}$, which being reckoned from $4\frac{1}{2}$ A. M. give the time of the day exactly 9, A. M. But the Sun was not at the altitude of 45°, till above half hour after 9. In like manner, if we take the eighteenth day (according to all the Editions and some Mss.) we shall find that the Sun indeed was 45° high at 10, A. M. exactly, but that *the fourth part* of the day *and half an hour and more* had been completed at 9, A. M.

In this uncertainty, I have left the text as I found it in all the best Mss. Only Ms. HA. does not express the hour, but reads thus:

Yt was atte cloke—.

(15) There is another circumstance, which rather inclines me to believe, that their friendship suffered some interruption in the latter part of their lives. In the new edition of the *Confessio Amantis*, which Gower published

The attack too at this time must appear the more extraordinary on the part of our bard, as he is just going to put into the mouth of his *Man of Law* a tale, of which almost every circumstance is borrowed from Gower. The fact is, that the story of Custance is related by Gower in his *Conf. Amant.* B. iv. and the story of *Apollonius* [16] in *Apollynus*, as he is there called in the VIIIth book of the same work: so that, if Chaucer really did mean to reflect upon his old friend, his choice of these two instances was rather unlucky.

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after the accession of Henry IV. the verses in praise of Chaucer [Ad. 1367. b. coll. 1. ed. 1532.] are omitted. See Ms. Harl. 1239. Though perhaps the death of Chaucer at that time had rendered the compliments contained in those verses less proper than it was at first. But there does not seem to have been a sufficient reason for omitting them, especially as the original date of the work, in the 1st of Richard II. is preserved. Indeed the only other alterations, which I have been able to discover, are toward the beginning and end, where every thing which had been said in praise of Richard in the first edition, is either left out or converted to the use of his successor.

[16] The History of *Apollonius King of Tyre* was supposed by Mark Welser, when he printed it in 1595, to have been translated from the Greek a thousand years before. [Fabr. Bib. Gr. V. d. p. 824.] It certainly bears strong marks of a Greek original, though it is not, that I know, now extant in that language. The Rythmical poem, under the same title, in modern Greek, was re-translated (if I may so speak) from the Latin—

§ XV. The Man of Lawes Tale, as I have just said, is taken, with very little variation, from Gower, *Conf. Amant.* B. ii. If there could be any doubt, upon a cursory perusal of the two tales, which of them was written first, the following passage, I think, is sufficient to decide the question. At ver. 5506, Chaucer says,—

> Som men wold sayn, how that the child Maurice
> Doth this message until this Emperour:—

and we read in Gower, that Maurice is actu-

—απο Λατινικης εις Ρωμαϊκην γλωσσαν. *Du Cange*, Index Author. *ad Gloss. Græc.* When Welser printed it he probably did not know that it had been published already, perhaps more than once, among the *Gesta Romanorum*. In an edition, which I have, printed at Rouen in 1521, it makes the 154th chapter. Toward the latter end of the XIIth Century, *Godfrey of Viterbo*, in his *Pantheon*, or universal Chronicle, inserted this Romance as part of the history of the third Antiochus, about 200 years before Christ. It begins thus [Ms. *Reg.* 14 C. xi.]:

> Filia Seleuci regis stat clara decore
> Matreque defunctâ pater arsit in ejus amore.
> Res habet effectum, pressa puella dolet.

The rest is in the same metre, with one Pentameter only to two Hexameters.

Gower, by his own acknowledgement, took his Story from the *Pantheon;* as the Author, whoever he was, of *Pericles Prince of Tyre* professes to have followed Gower.

ally sent upon this message to the Emperour. We may therefore fairly conclude that in this passage Chaucer alludes to Gower, who had treated the same subject before him, but, as he insinuates, with less propriety.

I do not however suppose that Gower was the inventor of this tale. It had probably passed through several hands before it came to him. I find among the *Cotton* Mss. Cal. A. ii. fol. 69. an old English Rime, entitled "*Emare*," in which the heroine under that name goes through a series of adventures for the most part (17) exactly similar to those of Constance. But neither was the author of this Rime the inventor of the story, for in fol. 70. a. he refers to his original "*in Romans*," or French, and in the last Stanza he tells us expressly—

> Thys ys on of *Brytayne layes*
> That was used by olde dayes.

Of the *Britaine layes* I shall have occasion to speak more at large, when I come to the *Frankelein's Tale.*

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(17) The chief differences are, that *Emarè* is originally exposed in a boat for refusing to comply with the incestuous desires of the Emperour her father; that she is driven on the coast of *Galys*, or Wales, and married to the king of that country. The contrivances of the stepmother, and the consequences of them, are the same in both stories.

§ XVI. *The Man of Lawes Tale* in the best Mss. is followed by the *Wife of Bathes Prologue and Tale*, and therefore I have placed them so here; not however merely in compliance with authority, but because, according to the common arrangement, in the *Merchant's Tale* (18) there is a direct reference to the *Wife of Bathes Prologue*, before it has been spoken. Such an impropriety I was glad to remove upon the authority of the best Mss. though it had been acquiesced in by all former Editors; especially as the same Mss. pointed out to me an other, I believe the true, place for both the *Merchant's* and the *Squier's* Tales, which have hitherto been printed immediately after the *Man of Lawes*. But of that hereafter.

§ XVII. The want of a few lines to introduce the Wife of Bathes Prologue is, perhaps, one of those defects, hinted at above, which Chaucer would have supplied if he had lived to finish his work. The extraordinary length of it, as well as the vein of pleasantry

(18) V. 9559. *Justine* says to his brother *January*—

The Wif of Bathe, if ye han understonde,
Of mariage, which ye now han in honde,
Declared hath ful wel in litel space—

alluding very plainly to this *Prologue* of the *Wife of Bath*. The impropriety of such an allusion in the mouth of *Justine* is gross enough. The truth is, that Chaucer

that runs through it, is very suitable to the character of the speaker. The greatest part must have been of Chaucer's own invention, though one may plainly see that he had been reading the popular invectives against marriage and women in general; such as, the Roman de la Rose; Valerius ad Rufinum *de non ducendâ uxore*; and particularly Hieronymus *contra Jovinianum* (19).

§ XVIII. The Wife of Bathes Tale seems to have been taken from the Story of *Florent* in Gower, *Conf. Amant.* B. i. or perhaps from an older narrative, in the *Gesta*

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has inadvertently given to *a character in the Merchant's Tale* an argument which *the Merchant himself* might naturally have used upon a similar occasion, *after* he had heard the *Wife of Bath*. If we suppose, with the Editions, *that the Wife of Bath had not at that time spoken her Prologue*, the impropriety will be increased to an incredible degree.

(19) The holy Father, by way of recommending celibacy, has exerted all his learning and eloquence (and he certainly was not deficient in either) to collect together and aggravate whatever he could find to the prejudice of the female sex. Among other things he has inserted his own translation (probably) of a long extract from what he calls—"*liber aureolus Theophrasti de nuptiis.*"

Next to him in order of time was the treatise entitled "*Epistola Valerii ad Rufinum de non ducendâ uxore.*" Ms. *Reg.* 12 D. iii. It has been printed, for the similarity of its sentiment, I suppose, among the works of St.

Romanorum, or some such collection, from which the story of Florent was itself borrowed. However that may have been, it must be allowed that Chaucer has considerably improved the fable by lopping off some improbable, as well as unnecessary, circumstances; and the transferring of the scene from Sicily to the Court of King Arthur must have had a very pleasing effect, before the fabulous majesty of that court was quite obliterated.

The old Ballad entitled "The Marriage of Sir Gawaine," [*Ancient Poetry*, vol. iii. p. 11.] which the learned Editor thinks may have furnished Chaucer with this tale, I should rather conjecture, with deference to so good a judge in these matters, to have been composed by one who had read both Gower and Chaucer.

Jerome, though it is evidently of a much later date. Tanner (from Wood's Ms. Coll.) attributes it to *Walter Map*. Bib. Brit. v. Map. I should not believe it to be older; as John of Salisbury, who has treated of the same subject in his *Polycrat.* l. viii. c. xi. does not appear to have seen it.

To these two books *Jean de Meun* has been obliged for some of the severest strokes in his *Roman de la Rose*; and Chaucer has transfused the quintessence of all the three works, upon the subject of Matrimony, into his *Wife of Bathes Prologue* and *Merchant's Tale*.

§ XIX. The Tales of the Frere and the Sompnour are well ingrafted upon that of the *Wife of Bath*. The ill humour which shows itself between those two characters is quite natural, as no two professions at that time were at more constant variance. The Regular Clergy, and particularly the Mendicant Freres, affected a total exemption from all Ecclesiastical jurisdiction, except that of the Pope, which made them exceedingly obnoxious to the Bishops, and of course to all the inferior officers of the national hierarchy.

I have not been able to trace either of these tales to any author older than Chaucer, and possibly they may both have been built upon some traditional pleasantries, which were never before committed to writing.*

§ XX. The Clerkes Tale is in a different strain from the three preceding. He tells us, in his *Prologue*, that he learned it *from Petrarch at Padua;* and this, by the way, is all the ground that I can find for the

* I am obliged to Mr. Steevens for pointing out to me a story which has a great resemblance, in its principal incidents, to *the Freres tale*. It is quoted by D'Artigny, *Mémoires d'Histoire*, &c. T. iii. p. 238. from a collection of Sermons, by an anonymous Dominican, printed about the beginning of the XVIth Century, under the title of "*Sermones discipuli.*"

notion that Chaucer had seen Petrarch (20) in Italy. It is not easy to say why Chaucer should choose to own an obligation for this tale to Petrarch rather than to Boccace, from whose *Decameron*, D. x. N. 10. it was trans-

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(20) I can find no older or better authority for this notion than the following passage in *Speght's* life of Chaucer, prefixed to the Edition in 1597. "Some write, that he with Petrarke was present at the marriage of Lionell Duke of Clarence with Violante daughter of Galeasius, Duke of Millaine: yet Paullus Jovius nameth not Chaucer; but Petrarke, he sayth, was there." It appears from an instrument in Rymer [*Liberat.* 42 E. III. m. 1.], that the Duke of Clarence passed from Dover to Calais, in his way to Milan, in the spring of 1368, with a retinue of 475 men and 1280 horses. That Chaucer might have attended the Duke upon this occasion is not impossible. He had been, probably, for some time in the king's service, and had received the year before a Grant of an annuity of 20 Marks—pro bono servitio, quod dilectus Valettus noster, Galfridus Chaucer nobis impendit et impendet in futurum. *Pat.* 41 E. III. p. 1. m. 13. ap. Rymer. There is a curious account of the feast at this marriage in the *Chronica di Mantoua* of *Aliprandi* [Murator. *Antiq. Med. Ævi*, vol. v. p. 1137, & seq.], but he does not give the names of the

"Grandi Signori e Baroni Inghilese,

who were, as he says,

"Con Messere Lionell' in compagnia."

The most considerable of them were probably those 26 (Knights and others) who, before their setting out for

lated by Petrarch in 1373, the year before his death, as appears by a remarkable letter, which he sent with his translation to Boccace, *Opp. Petrarch.* p. 540—7. Ed. Bas. 1581. It should seem too from the same letter that the story was not invented by Boccace, for

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Milan, procured the King's licence to appoint Attorneys general to act for them here. *Franc.* 42 E. III. m. 8. ap. Rymer. The name of Chaucer does not appear among them.

The embassy to *Genoa*, to which Chaucer was appointed in November 1372, might possibly have afforded him another opportunity of seeing Petrarch. But in the first place, it is uncertain whether he ever went upon that Embassy. If he did, the distance from *Genoa* to *Padua*, where Petrarch resided, is considerable; and I cannot help thinking that a reverential visit *from a Minister of the King of England* would have been so flattering to the old man, that either he himself or some of his biographers must have recorded it. On the other hand, supposing Chaucer at *Genoa*, it is to be presumed, that he would not have been deterred by the difficulties of a much longer journey from paying his respects to the first literary character of the age; and it is remarkable, that the time of this embassy, in 1373, is the precise time at which he could have learned the story of Griseldis, *from Petrarch at Padua*. For Petrarch in all probability made his translation *in that very year*, and he died in July of the year following.

The inquisitive and judicious author of *Mémoires pour la vie de Petrarque* gave us hopes [Pref. to. t. ii. p. 6.], that he would show that Chaucer was in connexion (*en*

Petrarch says, "that it had always pleased him *when he heard it many years before*," (21) whereas he had not seen the *Decameron* till very lately.

§ XXI. In the *Ballade*, with which *the Clerk* concludes his Tale, I have changed the

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liaison) with Petrarch. As he has not fulfilled his promise in a later (I fear, the last) volume of his very ingenious work, I suspect that his more accurate researches have not enabled him to verify an opinion, which he probably at first adopted upon the credit of some biographer of Chaucer.

(21)—Cum et mihi semper *ante multos annos audita* placuisset, et tibi usque adeo placuisse perpenderem, ut vulgari eam stylo tuo censueris non indignam, et fine operis, ubi rhetorum disciplina validiora quælibet collocari jubet. *Petrarch. loc. cit.* M. L'Abbé de Sade [*Mem. de. Petr.* t. iii. p. 797.] says, that the Story of Griseldis is taken from an ancient Ms. in the library of M. Foucault, entitled, *Le parement des Dames*. If this should have been said upon the authority of *Manni* [Ist. del Decam. p. 603.], as I very much suspect, and if *Manni* himself meant to refer to M. Galland's *Discours sur quelques anciens Poetes* [Mem. de l'Acad. des I. et B. L. t. ii. p. 686.], we must look still further for the original of Boccace's Novel. M. Galland says nothing, as I observe, of the *antiquity* of the Ms. Le titre (he says) est *Le parement des Dames*, avec des explications en Prose, où l'on trouve l'histoire de Griselidis que feu M. Perrault a mise en vers: but he says also expressly, that it was a work of *Olivier de la Marche*, who was not born till many years after the death of Boccace.

order of the three last Stanzas, so as to make it end—

> And let him *care*, and *wepe*, and wringe, and *waile*—

and immediately after I have placed the Marchants Prologue, beginning—

> *Weping* and *wailing*, *care* and other sorwe
> I have enough—.

This arrangement, which recommends itself at first sight, is also supported by so many Mss. of the best authority, that, without great negligence or dulness, I could not have either overlooked or rejected it, especially as the whole turn of the *Marchant's Prologue*, and the express mention of *Grisilde* in ver. 9100. demonstrate that he is supposed to speak with the *Clerke's Tale* fresh in his memory.

§ XXII. The scene of the Marchants Tale is laid in Italy, but none of the names, except Damian and Justin, seem to be Italian, but rather made at pleasure; so that I doubt whether the story be really of Italian growth. The adventure of *the Pear-tree* I find in a small collection of Latin fables, written by one Adolphus, in Elegiac verses of his fashion, in the year 1315. As this fable has never been printed but once, and in a book not commonly to be met with, I shall transcribe

below (22) the material parts of it, and I dare say the Reader will not be very anxious to see any more.

Whatever was the real origin of this Tale, the Machinery of the Faeries, which Chaucer has used so happily, was probably added by himself; and indeed, I cannot help thinking, that his *Pluto* and *Proserpina* were the true

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(22) *Adolphi Fabulæ*, ap. Leyser. Hist. Poet. Medii Ævi, p. 2008.

Fabula 1.

Cæcus erat quidam, cui pulcra virago—
— — — — — —
In curtis viridi resident hi cespite quâdam
Luce. Petit mulier robur adire Pyri.
Vir favet, amplectens mox robur ubique lacertis.
Arbor adunca fuit, qua latuit juvenis.
Amplexatur eam dans basia dulcia. Terram
Incepit colere vomere cum proprio.
Audit vir strepitum: nam sæpe carentia sensus
Unius in reliquo, nosco, vigere solet.
Heu miser! exclamat; te lædit adulter ibidem.
Conqueror hoc illi qui dedit esse mihi.
Tunc Deus omnipotens, qui condidit omnia verbo,
Qui sua membra probat, vascla velut figulus,
Restituens aciem misero, tonat illico; Fallax
Femina, cur tantâ fraude nocere cupis?
— — — — — — —
Percipit illa virum. Vultu respondet alacri:
Magna dedi medicis; non tibi cura fuit.
Ast, ubi lustra sua satis uda petebat Apollo,
Candida splendescens Cynthia luce merâ,

progenitors of *Oberon* and *Titania* (23), or rather, that they themselves have, once at least, deigned to revisit our poetical system under the latter names.

§ XXIII. The Prologue to *the Squier's Tale* appears now for the first time in print. Why it has been omitted by all former Editors I cannot guess, except, perhaps, because it did not suit with the place, which, for reasons best known to themselves, they

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Tunc sopor irrepsit mea languida corpora: quædam
Astitit: insonuit auribus illa meis.
Ludere cum juvene studeas in roboris alto;
Prisca viro dabitur lux cito, crede mihi.
Quod feci. Dominus ideo tibi munera lucis
Contulit; idcirco munera redde mihi.
Addidit ille fidem mulieri, de prece cujus
Se sanum credit, mittit et omne nefas.

— — — — — —

The same story is inserted among *The Fables of Alphonse*, printed by Caxton in English, with those of *Æsop, Avian and Pogge*, without date; but I do not find it in the original Latin of Alphonsus, Ms. Reg. 10. B. xii. or in any of the French translations of his work that I have examined.

(23) This observation is not meant to extend further than *the King and Queen* of Faery; in whose characters, I think it is plain, that Shakespeare, in imitation of Chaucer, has dignified our Gothic Elves with the manners and language of the classical Gods and Goddesses. In the rest of his Faery system, Shakespeare seems to have followed the popular superstition of his own time.

were determined to assign to *the Squier's Tale*, that is, after *the Man of Lawe's* and before *the Marchant's*. I have chosen rather to follow the Mss. of the best authority in placing *the Squiers Tale* after *the Marchant's*, and in connecting them together by this Prologue, agreeably, as I am persuaded, to Chaucer's intention. The lines which have usually been printed by way of Prologue to *the Squier's Tale*, as I believe them to have been really composed by Chaucer, though not intended for *the Squier's* Prologue, I have prefixed to *the Shipman's Tale*, for reasons, which I shall give when I come to speak of that Tale.

§ XXIV. I should have been very happy if the Mss. which have furnished the SQUIERS Prologue, had supplied the deficient part of his TALE, but I fear the judgment of Milton was too true, that this story was "*left half-told*" by the author. I have never been able to discover the probable original of this tale, and yet I should be very hardly brought to believe that the whole, or even any considerable part of it, was of Chaucer's invention.

§ XXV. We are now arrived with the common editions, though by a different course, at the FRANKELEINES TALE; and here again we must be obliged to the Mss.

not indeed, as in the last instance, for a *new* Prologue, but for authorising us to prefix to this Tale of *the Frankelein* a Prologue, which in the common Editions is prefixed to the Tale of *the Marchant*, together with the true Prologue of that Tale, as printed above. It is scarce conceivable how these two Prologues could ever be joined together and given to the same character, as they are not only entirely unconnected, but also in one point directly contradictory to each other; for in that, which is properly *the Marchant's*, he says expressly [ver. 9110.], that he had been married "*two monthes* and not more;" whereas in the other, the Speaker's chief discourse is about *his son*, who is *grown up*. This therefore, upon the authority of the best Mss. I have restored to *the Frankelein*; and I must observe, that the sentiments of it are much more suitable to *his* character than to that of *the Marchant*. It is quite natural, that a wealthy land-holder, of a generous disposition, as he is described [ver. 333—62.], who has been Sheriff, Knight of the Shire, &c. should be anxious to see his son, as we say, *a Gentleman*, and that he should talk slightingly of money in comparison with polished manners and virtuous endowments; but neither the character which Chaucer has

drawn of *his Marchant*, nor our general notions of the profession *at that time*, prepare us to expect from him so liberal a strain of thinking.

§ XXVI. The Frankeleins Tale, as he tells us himself, is taken from a *British Lay* (24); and the names of persons and places, as well as the scene and circumstances

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(24) Les premieres Chansons Françoises furent nommées des Lais; says M. de la Ravaliere, *Poes. du Roi. de Nav.* t. i. p. 215. And so far I believe he is right. But I see no foundation for supposing with him, in the same page, that the Lay was *une sorte d'Elegie*, and that it was derived *du mot Latin* Lessus, *qui signifie des plaintes;* or [in p. 217.] that it was *la chanson—le plus majestueuse et la plus grave.* It seems more probable that *Lai* in French was anciently a generical term, answering to *Song* in English. The passage which M. de la Ravaliere has quoted from *Le Brut*,

"Molt sot de *Lais*, molt sot de notes"—

is thus rendered by our *Layamon*. [See before, Essay, &c. n. 46.]

Ne cuthe na mon swa muchel of *song*.

The same word is used by Peirol d'Alvergna, Ms. Crofts, fol. lxxxv. to denote the *songs of birds*, certainly not of the *plaintive* kind.

Et li ausell s'en van enamoran
L'uns per l'autre, et fan vantas (or *cantas*) et *lais*.

For my own part I am inclined to believe, that *Liod*,

of the story, make this account extremely probable. The Lay itself is either lost, or

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Island. *Lied*, Teuton. *Leoth*, Saxon, and *Lai*, French, are all to be deduced from the same Gothic original.

But beside this general sense, the name of *Lay* was particularly given to *the French translations* of certain Poems, originally composed in Armorican Bretagne, and in the Armorican language. I say the *French translations*, because *Lay*, not being (as I can find) an Armorican word, could hardly have been the name, by which a species of Poetry, not imported from France, was distinguished by the first composers in Bretagne.

The chief, perhaps the only, collection of these *Lais* that is now extant, was translated into French octosyllable verse by a Poetess, who calls herself *Marie;* the same, without doubt, who made the translation of *Esope*, quoted by Pasquier [*Rech.* l. viii. ch. i.] and Fauchet [L. ii. n. 84.], and placed by them in the reign of St. Louis, about the middle of the XIIIth Century. Both her works have been preserved together in Ms. *Harl.* 978. in a fair hand, which I see no reason to judge more recent than the latter end of that Century.

The *Lais*, with which only we are at present concerned, were addressed by her to some king. Fol. 139.

> En le honur de vous, *noble reis*,
> Ki tant estes pruz e curteis,
> A ki tute joie se encline,
> E en ki quoer tuz biens racine,
> M'entremis des *lais* assembler,
> Par rime faire e reconter.—

A few lines after, she names herself.

> Oez, Seignurs, ke dit *Marie*.

The titles of the Poems in this collection, to the number

buried, perhaps for ever, in one of those sepulchres of Mss. which, by courtesy, are

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of twelve, are recited in the Harleian Catalogue. They are, in general, the names of the principal persons in the several Stories, and are most of them evidently Armorican; and I think no one can read the Stories themselves without being persuaded, that they were either really translated from the Armorican language, or at least composed by one who was well acquainted with that language and country.

Though these Poems of Marie have of late been so little known as to have entirely escaped the researches of Fauchet and other French Antiquaries, they were formerly in high estimation. *Denis Piramus*, a very tolerable versifier of the *Legend of St. Edmund the King* [Ms. *Cotton.* Dom. A. xi.], allows that *Dame Marie*, as he calls her, had great merit in the composition of her Lays, *though they are not all true*—

> E si en est ele mult loée,
> E la ryme par tut amee.

A translation of her *Lays*, as it should seem, into one of the Northern languages was among the books given by Gabriel de la Gardie to the University of Upsal, under the title of *Variæ Britannorum Fabulæ*. See the description of the book by Stephanius, in Cat. Libb. Septent. at the end of Hickes, Gr. A. S. edit. 1689, 4to. p. 180. That Chaucer had read them I think extremely probable, not only from a passage in his Dreme [ver. 1820—1926.], which seems to have been copied from the *Lay of Elidus*, but also from the manner in which he makes the Frankelein speak of the Bretons and their compositions.

However, in Chaucer's time, there were other *British*

called Libraries; but there are two imitations of it extant by Boccace, the first in the Vth Book of his *Philocopo*, and the second in the *Decameron*, D. x. N. 5. They agree in every respect with each other, except that the scene and the names are different, and in the latter the narration is less prolix and the style less flowery than in the former, which

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Lays extant beside this collection by Marie. *Emarè* has been mentioned before, § XV. An old English *Ballad of Sir Gowther* [Ms. *Reg.* 17 B. xliii.] is said by the writer to have been taken *out of one of the Layes of Britanye*: in another place he says—*the first Lay* of *Britanye*. The original of *the Frankelein's Tale* was probably a third. There were also *Lays*, which did not pretend to be *British*, as *Le Lay d'Aristote*, *Li Lais de l'Oiselet* [Fabliaux, tom. i.]. *Le Lai du Corn* by Robert Bikez [Ms. *Bod.* 1687.] is said by him to have been invented by *Garaduc*, who accomplished the adventure. In the ballad, entitled "THE BOY AND THE MANTLE," [Anc. Poet. v. iii. p. 1.] which I suspect to have been made up out of *this Lay* and *Le Court Mantel*, the successful knight is called *Cradock*. Robert Bikez says further, that the Horn was still to be seen at Cirencester.

Q'fust a *Cirincetre*
A une haute feste,
La pureit il veer
Icest corn tout pur veir.
Ceo dist *Robert Bikez*—

In none of these Lays do we find the qualities attributed

was a juvenile work (25). The only material point, in which Boccace seems to have departed from his original, is this; instead of "*the removal of the rockes*" the Lady desires "*a garden, full of the flowers and fruits of May, in the month of January;*" and some such alteration was certainly necessary, when the scene came to be removed from Bretagne

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to that sort of composition by M. de la Ravaliere. According to these examples we should rather define the Lay to be a species of *serious* narrative poetry, of *a moderate length*, in a simple style and *light metre*. *Serious* is here opposed (not to *pleasant*) but to *ludicrous*, in order to distinguish the Lay from the *Conte* or *Fabliau;* as on the other hand its *moderate length* distinguishes it from the *Geste*, or common *Roman*. All the Lays that I have seen are in *light metre*, not exceeding eight syllables. See before, Essay, &c. n. 60.

(25) I saw once an Edition of the *Philocopo*, printed at Venice, 1503, fol. with a letter at the end of it, in which the Publisher Hieronymo Squarzaficho says (if I do not misremember, "that this work was written by Boccace at twenty-five years of age (about 1338), while he was at Naples in the house of John Barrile." *Johannes Barrillus* is called by Boccace [*Geneal. Deor.* l. xiv. c. 19.] *magni spiritus homo*. He was sent by King Robert to attend Petrarch to his coronation at Rome, and is introduced by the latter in his second Eclogue under the name of *Idæus;* ab Idâ, monte Cretensi, unde et ipse oriundus fuit. *Intentiones Eclogarum Franc. Petrarchæ*, Ms. *Bod.* 558. Not knowing at present where to find that Edition, I am obliged to rely upon my

to Spain and Italy, as it is in Boccace's novels (26). I should guess that Chaucer has preserved pretty faithfully the principal incidents of the *British tale*, though he has probably thrown in some smaller circumstances to embellish his narration. The long list of virtuous women in Dorigene's Solilo-

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memory only for this story, which I think highly probable, though it is not mentioned, as I recollect, by any of the other Biographers of Boccace. A good life of Boccace is still much wanted.

The adventures of *Florio* and *Biancofiore*, which make the principal subject of the *Philocopo*, were famous long before Boccace, as he himself informs us, l. i. p. 6. Ed. 1723. Hieronymo Squarzaficho, in the letter mentioned above, says, that the story "anchora si nova insino ad ogi scripta in un librazolo de triste et male composto rime— dove il Boccaccio ni cavo questo digno et elegante libro." *Floris* and *Blancaflor* are mentioned as illustrious lovers by *Matfres Eymengau de Bezers*, a Languedocian Poet, in his *Breviari d'amor* dated in the year 1288. Ms. *Reg.* 19 C. i. fol. 199. It is probable however that the Story was enlarged by Boccace, and particularly I should suppose that the *Love-questions* in l. v. (the fourth of which questions contains the Novel referred to in the text) were added by him.

(26) The *Conte Boiardo*, the precursor and model of Ariosto, in his *Orlando inamorato*, l. i. ca. 12. has inserted a Tale upon the plan of Boccace's two novels, but with considerable alterations, which have carried the Story, I apprehend, still further from its *British* original.

quy is plainly copied from HIERONYMUS *contra Jovinianum.*

§ XXVII. Thus far I flatter myself I have been not unsuccessful in restoring the true order, and connexion with each other, of the *Clerkes,* the *Marchantes,* the *Squieres,* and the *Frankeleines* Tales, but with regard to the next step, which I have taken, I must own myself more dubious. In all the editions the Tales of *the Nonne* and *the Chanones Yeman* precede *the Doctoures,* but the best Mss. agree in removing those Tales to the end of *the Nonnes Preestes,* and I have not scrupled to adopt this arrangement, which, I think, is indisputably established by the following consideration. When *the Monk* is called upon for his Tale the Pilgrims were near Rochester [ver. 13932.], but when *the Chanon* overtakes them they were advanced to Boughton under Blee [ver. 16024.], twenty miles beyond Rochester, so that the Tale of *the Chanones Yeman,* and that of *the Nonne* to which it is annexed, cannot with any propriety be admitted till after *the Monkes* Tale, and consequently not till after *the Nonnes Preestes,* which is inseparably linked to that of *the Monk.*

§ XXVIII. These two Tales therefore of *the Nonne* and *the Chanones Yeman* being re-

moved out of the way, *the Doctoures* comes clearly next to *the Frankeleines;* but how they are to be connected together, and whether at all, is a matter of doubt. What I have printed by way of *Prologue* to the *Doctoures* Tale I found in one of the best Mss. but only in one: in the others it has no Prologue. The first line applies so naturally and smartly to *the Frankeleines* conclusion, that I am strongly inclined to believe it from the hand of Chaucer, but I cannot say so much for the five following. I would therefore only wish these lines to be received for the present, according to the Law-phrase, *de bene esse*, till they shall either be more authentically established, or superseded by the discovery of the genuine Prologue.

§ XXIX. In the Doctoures Tale, beside Livy, who is quoted, Chaucer may possibly have followed Gower in some particulars, who has also related the story of Virginia, *Conf. Amant.* B. vii. but he has not been a servile copyist of either of them.

§ XXX. *The Pardoneres Tale* has a *Prologue* which connects it with *the Doctoures.* There is also a pretty long preamble, which may either make part of the Prologue, or of the Tale. The Mss. differ in this point. I have chosen to throw it into the Tale, and to

confine the Prologue to what I suppose to be its proper use, the introduction of the new Speaker. When he is once in complete possession of his office of entertaining the company, his Prefaces or Digressions should all, I think, be equally considered as parts of his Tale.

The mere outline of THE PARDONERES TALE is to be found in the *Cento Novelle Antiche.* Nov. lxxxii.

§ XXXI. The Tale of *the Shipman* in the best Mss. has no *Prologue.* What has been printed as such in the common Editions is evidently spurious. To supply this defect I have ventured, upon the authority of one Ms. (and, I confess, not one of the best) to prefix to this tale the *Prologue,* which has usually been prefixed to the tale of *the Squier.* As this prologue was undoubtedly composed by Chaucer, it must have had a place somewhere in this Edition, and if I cannot prove that it was really intended by him for this place, I think the Reader will allow that it fills the vacancy very well. *The Pardoneres tale* may very properly be called "*a thrifty tale,*" and he himself "*a learned man*" [ver. 12905—8.]; and all the latter part, though highly improper in the mouth of the *curteis Squier,*" is perfectly suited to the character of the *Shipman.*

This tale is generally supposed to be taken from the *Decameron.* D. viii. N. 1. but I should rather believe that Chaucer was obliged to some old French *Fableour,* from whom Boccace had also borrowed the ground-work of his Novel, as is the case of *the Reves* Tale. Upon either supposition, a great part of the incidents must probably have been of his own invention.

§ XXXII. The transition from the Tale of *the Shipman* to that of *the Prioresse* is happily managed. I have not been able to discover from what Legende of the Miracles of our Lady THE PRIORESSES TALE is taken. From the scene being laid in Asia, it should seem, that this was one of the oldest of the many stories, which have been propagated, at different times, to excite or justify several merciless persecutions of the Jews, upon the charge of murthering Christian children (27).

(27) In the first four months of the *Acta Sanctorum* by Bollandus, I find the following names of Children canonized, as having been murthered by Jews: xxv Mart. *Willielmus Norwicensis,* 1144. *Richardus, Parisiis.* 1179. xvii Apr. *Rudolphus, Bernæ.* 1287. *Wernerus, Wesaliæ.* an eod. *Albertus, Poloniæ.* 1598. I suppose the remaining eight months would furnish at least as many more. See a Scottish Ballad [Rel. of Anc. Poet. v. i. p. 32.], upon one of these supposed murthers. The Editor has very ingeniously conjec-

The story of *Hugh of Lincoln*, which is mentioned in the last Stanza, is placed by Matthew Paris under the year 1255.

§ XXXIII. Next to the *Prioresse* CHAUCER himself is called upon for his Tale. In the *Prologue* he has dropped a few touches descriptive of his own person and manner, by which we learn, that he was used to look much upon the ground; was of a corpulent habit; and reserved in his behaviour. His RIME OF SIRE THOPAS was clearly intended to ridicule the "palpable-gross" fictions of the common Rimers of that age, and still more, perhaps, the meanness of their language and versification. It is full of phrases taken from *Isumbras*, *Li beaus desconus*, and other Romances in the same style, which are still extant.

§ XXXIV. For the more complete reprobation of this species of Riming, even *the*

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tured that "Mirryland" in ver. 1 is a corruption of "Milan." Perhaps the real occasion of the Ballad may have been what is said to have happened at *Trent*, in 1475, to a boy called *Simon*. The Cardinal Hadrian, about fifty years after, mentioning the Rocks of Trent, adds, "quo Judæi *ob Simonis cædem* ne aspirare quidem audent." *Præf. ad librum de Serm. Lat.* The change of the name in the Song, from *Simon* to *Hugh*, is natural enough in *this* country, where similar stories of *Hugh of Norwich* and *Hugh of Lincoln* had been long current.

Host, who is not to be suspected of too refined a taste, is made to cry out against it, and to cut short Sire Thopas in the midst of his adventures. Chaucer has nothing to say for his *Rime*, but that "*it is the best he can*" [ver. 13856.], and readily consents to tell another Tale; but having just laughed so freely at the bad poetry of his time, he might think it, perhaps, too invidious to exhibit a specimen of better in his own person, and therefore his other Tale is in prose, a mere translation from, *Le Livre de Melibee et de dame Prudence*, of which several copies are still preserved in Ms. (28). It is in truth, as he calls it, [ver. 13868.] "*a moral tale vertuous*," and was probably much esteemed in its time, but, in this age of levity, I doubt some Reader will be apt to regret, that he did not rather give us the remainder of *Sire Thopas*.

§ XXXV. The Prologue of the Monkes Tale connects it with *Melibee*. The *Tale* itself is certainly formed upon the plan of *Boccace's* great work *de casibus virorum illustrium*, but Chaucer has taken the several

(28) Two copies of this work are in the Museum, Ms. *Reg.* 19 C. vii. and 19 C. xi. in French prose. Du Fresnoy, Bibliot. des Romans, v. ii. p. 248. mentions two copies of the same work *en vers, dans la Bibliotheque Seguier*.

Stories, of which it is composed, from different authors, who will be particularized in the Notes.

§ XXXVI. After a reasonable number of melancholy ditties, or Tragedies, as the Monk calls them, he is interrupted by the Knight, and the Host addresses himself to *the Nonnes Preest*, to tell them "*swiche thing as may* their *hertes glade.*"

The Tale of the Nonnes Preest is cited by Dryden, together with that of *the Wife of Bath*, as of Chaucer's own invention. But that great Poet was not very conversant with the authors of which Chaucer's library seems to have been composed. *The Wife of Bathes Tale*, has been shown above to be taken from Gower, and the Fable of the Cock and the Fox, which makes the ground of *the Nonnes Preestes Tale*, is clearly borrowed from a collection of Æsopean and other Fables, by *Marie* a French Poetess, whose collection of *Lais* has been mentioned before in n. 24. As her Fable is short and well told, and has never been printed, I shall insert it here at length (29) and the more willingly, because it

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(29) From Ms. Harl. 978, f. 76.

D un cok recunte, ki estot
Sur un femer, e si chantot.

furnishes a convincing proof, how able Chaucer was to work up an excellent Tale out of very small materials.

§ XXXVII. The sixteen lines, which are printed at the end of the *Nonnes Preestes Tale*, might perhaps more properly be considered as the beginning of the Prologue to the succeeding Tale, if it were certain what Tale was intended to succeed. In both Dr. Askew's Mss. the last of these lines is read thus—

Seide unto *the Nunne* as ye shul heer.—

and there are six more lines to introduce her Tale; but as these six lines are manifestly

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Par de lez li vient un gupilz,
Si l'apela par muz beaus diz.
Sire, fet il, muz te vei bel;
Unc ne vi si gent oisel.
Clere voiz as sur tute rien,
Fors tun pere, qe jo vi bien;
Unc oisel meuz ne chanta;
Mes il le fist meux, kar il cluna.
Si puis jeo fere, dist li cocs.
Les eles bat, les oilz ad clos,
Chanter quida plus clerement.
Li gupil saut, e sil prent;
Vers la forest od lui s'en va.
Par mi un champ, u il passa,
Curent apres tut li pastur;
Li chiens le huent tut entur.
Veit le gupil, ki le cok tient,

forged for the purpose, I have chosen rather to adhere to the other Mss. which acknowledge themselves defective in this part, and give us *the Nonnes Tale*, as I have done, without any introduction. It is very probable, I think, that Chaucer himself had not determined whether he should connect *the Nonnes Tale* with that of *the Nonnes Preest*, or whether he should interpose a Tale or two, or perhaps more, between them.

The Tale of the Nonne is almost literally translated from the life of St. Cecilia in the *Legenda aurea* of *Jacobus Januensis*. It is mentioned by Chaucer, as a separate

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Mar le guaina si par eus vient.
Va, fet li cocs, si lur escrie,
Qe sui tuens, ne me larras mie.
Li gupil volt parler en haut,
E li cocs de sa buche saut.
Sur un haut fust s'est muntez.
Quant li gupilz s'est reguardez,
Mut par se tient enfantillé,
Que li cocs l' ad si enginné.
De mal talent e de droit ire
La buche comence a maudire,
Ke parole quant devereit taire.
Li cocs respunt, si dei jeo faire,
Maudire l'oil, ki volt cluiner,
Quant il deit guarder e guaiter,
Que mal ne vient a lur Seignur.
Ceo funt li fol tut li plusur,

work in his *Legende of good women* [ver. 426.] under the title of "the life of Seint Cecile," and it still retains evident marks that it was not originally composed in the form of a Tale to

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Parolent quant deivent taiser,
Teisent quant il deivent parler.

The resemblance of Chaucer's Tale to this fable is obvious; and it is the more probable that he really copied from Marie, because no such Fable is to be found either in the Greek Æsop, or in any of the Latin compilations (that I have seen) which went about in the dark ages under the name of Æsop. Whether it was invented by Marie, or whether she translated it, with the rest of her fables, from the Anglo-Saxon version of Æsop by King Alfred, as she says herself, I cannot pretend to determine. Though no Anglo-Saxon version of Æsop be now as I can find, extant, there may have been one formerly, which may have passed, like many other translations into that language, under the name of Alfred; and it may be urged in support of the probability of Marie's positive assertion, that she appears, from passages in her *Lais*, to have had some knowledge of English. I must observe that the name of the King, whose English Version she professes to follow, is differently stated in different Mss. In the best Ms. *Harl.* 978. it is plainly *Li reis Alured*. In a later Ms. Vesp. B. xiv. it is *Li reis Henris*. Pasquier [*Recherches*, l. viii. c. i.] calls him *Li roy Auuert*, and Du Chesne (as quoted by Menage, v. Roman) *Li rois Mires;* but all the copies agree in making Marie declare, that she translated her work "*de l'Anglois en Roman*." A Latin Æsop, Ms. *Reg.* 15 A. vii. has the same story of an English version by order of a *Rex Angliæ Affrus*.

be *spoken* by *the Nonne* (30). However there can be no doubt that Chaucer meant to incorporate it into this collection of Canterbury Tales, as the *Prologue of the Chanones Yeman* expressly refers to it.

§ XXXVIII. The introduction of the *Chanones Yeman* to tell a Tale, at a time when so many of the original characters remain to be called upon, appears a little extraordinary. It should seem, that some sudden resentment had determined Chaucer to interrupt the regular course of his work, in order to insert a Satire against the Alchemists. That their pretended science was much cultivated about this time (31), and produced its usual evils,

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(30) The whole Introduction is in the style of a person *writing*, and not of one *speaking*. If we compare it with the Introduction to the Prioresses Tale, the difference will be very striking. See particularly ver. 15546.

Yet praye I you, that *reden* that I *write*—

and in ver. 15530. the Relater, or rather Writer, of the Tale, in all the Mss. except one of middling authority, is called "unworthy *Sone* of Eve." Such little inaccuracies are strong proofs of an unfinished work. See before, p. 264, 265.

(31) The first considerable Coinage of Gold in this country was begun by Edward III. in the year 1343, and according to Camden [in his *Remains*, Art. *Money*] "the Alchemists did affirm, as an unwritten verity, that the Rosenobles, which were coined soon after, were made

may fairly be inferred from the Act, which was passed soon after, 5 H. IV. c. iv. to make it Felonie *to multiplie gold or silver, or to use the art of multiplication.*

§ XXXIX. In the PROLOGUE TO THE MANCIPLES TALE, the Pilgrims are supposed to be arrived at a little town called "Bob up and down, under the blee, in Canterbury way." I cannot find a town of that name in

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by projection or multiplication Alchemical of Raymond Lully in the Tower of London." In proof of this, "besides the tradition of the Rabbies in that faculty," they alleged "the Inscription; *Jesus autem transiens per medium eorum ibat;*" which they profoundly expounded, *as Jesus passed invisible and in most secret manner by the middest of Pharisees, so that gold was made by invisible and secret art amidst the ignorant.* But others say, "that Text was the only amulet used in that credulous warfaring age to escape dangers in battles." Thus Camden. I rather believe it was an Amulet, or Charm, principally used against Thieves; upon the authority of the following passage of Sir John Mandeville, c. x. p. 137. "And an half myle fro Nazarethe is the Lepe of oure Lord: for the Jewes ladden him upon an highe roche for to make him lepe down and have slayn him: but Jesu passed amonges hem, and lepte upon another roche; and yit ben the steppes of his feet sene in the roche where he allyghte. And therfore seyn sum men whan thei dreden hem of Thefes, on ony weye, or of Enemyes; *Jesus autem transiens per medium illorum ibat:* that is to seyne; *Jesus forsothe passynge be the myddes of hem he wente:* in tokene and mynde, that oure

any Map, but it must have lain between Boughton, the place last mentioned, and Canterbury. The Fable of the Crow, which is the subject of THE MANCIPLES TALE, has been related by so many authors, from Ovid down to Gower, that it is impossible to say whom Chaucer principally followed. His skill in new dressing an old story was never, perhaps, more successfully exerted.

Lord passed thorghe out the Jewes crueltee, and scaped safly fro hem; *so surely mowe men passen the perile of Thefes.*" See also Catal. Mss. Harl. n. 2966. It must be owned that a Spell against Thieves was the most serviceable, if not the most elegant, Inscription that could be put upon Gold Coin.

Ashmole, in his *Theatrum Chemicum*, p. 443. has repeated this ridiculous story concerning Lully with additional circumstances, as if he really believed it; though Lully by the best accounts had been dead above twenty years before Edward III. began to coin Gold.

The same Author (*Mercuriophilus Anglicus*, as he styles himself) has inserted among his *Hermetique Mysteries* (p. 213.) an old English Poem, under the title of *Hermes Bird*, which (he says in his Notes, p. 467.) was thought to have been written originally by *Raymund Lully*, or at least made English by Cremer, Abbot of Westminster and Scholar to Lully, p. 465. The truth is, that the Poem is one of *Lydgate's*, and had been printed by Caxton under it strue title, *The Chorle and the Bi d;* and the fable, on which it is built, is related by *Petrus Alphonsus* (*de Clericali Disciplinâ*. Ms. *Reg.* 10 B. xii.) who lived above two hundred years before Lully.

§ XL. After the *Tale of the Manciple* the common Editions, since 1542 (32), place what is called *the Plowman's Tale;* but, as I cannot understand that there is the least ground of evidence, either external or internal, for believing it to be a work of Chaucer's, I have not admitted it into this Edition.

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(32) In the Edition of 1542, when *the Plowman's Tale* was first printed, it was placed *after* the Person's Tale. The editor, whoever he was, had not assurance enough, it should seem, to thrust it into the body of the work. In the subsequent Editions however, as it had probably been well received by the public, upon account of its violent invectives against the Church of Rome, it was advanced to a more honourable station, next to the Manciple's Tale and *before* the Person's. The only account which we have of any Ms. of this Tale is from Mr. Speght, who says (Note prefixed to *Plowman's Tale*), that he had "seene it in written hand in John Stowes Librarie in a booke of such antiquitie, as seemed to have been written neare to Chaucer's time." He does not say that it was *among the Canterbury Tales,* or that it had *Chaucer's name* to it. We can therefore only judge of it by the internal evidence, and upon that I have no scruple to declare my own opinion, that it has not the least resemblance to Chaucer's manner, either of writing or thinking, in his other works. Though he and Boccace have laughed at some of the abuses of religion and the disorders of Ecclesiastical persons, it is quite incredible that either of them, or even Wicliff himself, would have railed at the whole government of the Church, in the style of this *Plowman's Tale.* If they had been dis-

§ XLI. The Persones Prologue therefore is here placed next to *the Manciple's Tale*, agreeably to all the Mss. which are known, and to every Edition before 1542. In this Prologue, which introduces the last Tale upon the journey to Canterbury, Chaucer has again pointed out to us the time of the day;

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posed to such an attempt, their times would not have borne it; but it is probable, that Chaucer, though he has been pressed into the service of Protestantism by some zealous writers, was as good a Catholick as men of his understanding and rank in life have generally been. The necessity of auricular Confession, one of the great scandals of Popery, cannot be more strongly inculcated than it is in the following *Tale of the Person*.

I will just observe, that Spenser seems to speak of the Author of *the Plowman's Tale* as a distinct person from Chaucer, though, in compliance, I suppose, with the taste of his age, he puts them both on the same footing. In the epilogue to *the Shepherd's Calendar* he says to his book,—

Dare not to match thy pipe with *Tityrus* his stile,
Nor with the Pilgrim that *the Ploughman* plaid awhile.

I know that Mr. Warton, in his excellent *Observations on Spenser*, v. i. p. 125, supposes this passage to refer to *the Visions of Pierce Ploughman*; but my reason for differing from him is, that the Author of the Visions never, as I remember, speaks of *himself* in the character of *a Ploughman*.

The Pilgrimes Tale has also, with as little foundation, been attributed to Chaucer (Speght's Life of Ch.).

but the hour by the clock is very differently represented in the Mss. In some it is *ten*, in others *two*: in most of the best Mss. *foure*, and in one *five*. According to the phænomena here mentioned, the Sun being 29° high, and the length of the Shadow to the projecting body as 11 to 6, it was *between four and five*. As by this reckoning there were at least three hours left to sunset, one does not well see with what propriety the Host admonishes the Person to *haste him*, because "*the Sonne wol adoun*," and to be "*fructuous in litel space;*" and indeed *the Person*, knowing probably how much time he had good, seems to have paid not the least regard to his admonition; for his Tale, if it may be so called, is twice as long as any of the others. It is entitled in some Mss. "*Tractatus de Pœnitentiâ*, pro Fabulâ, ut dicitur, Rectoris;" and I much suspect that it is a translation of some such treatise. I cannot recommend it as a very entertaining or edifying performance at this day; but the Reader will be pleased to remember, in excuse both of Chaucer and his Editor, that considering the Canterbury Tales as a great picture of life and manners, the piece would not have been complete, if it had not included the Religion of the time.

§ XLII. What is commonly called *the Retractation* at the end of the Person's Tale, in several Mss. makes part of that Tale; and certainly the appellation of "*litel tretise*" suits better with a single tale, than with such a voluminous work as the whole body of Canterbury Tales. But then on the other hand the recital, which is made in one part of it of several compositions of Chaucer, could properly be made by nobody but himself. I have printed it, as I found it in Ms. Ask i. with a few corrections from other Mss.

Having thus gone through the several parts of the Canterbury Tales, which are printed in this Edition, it may not be improper, in the conclusion of this Discourse, to state shortly the parts which are wanting to complete the journey *to* Canterbury: of the rest of Chaucer's intended Plan, as has been said before, we have nothing. Supposing therefore the number of the Pilgrims to have been *twenty-nine* (see before, § VI.), and allowing the Tale of *the Chanones Yeman* to stand in the place of that which we had a right to expect from *the Knightes Yeman*, the Tales wanting will be only those of the *five* City-Mechanics and the Ploughman. It is not likely that the Tales told by such characters would have been among the most

valuable of the set; but they might, and probably would, have served to link together those which at present are unconnected; and for that reason it is much to be regretted that they either have been lost, or, as I rather (33) believe, were never finished by the Author.

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(33) When we recollect, that Chaucer's papers must in all probability have fallen into the hands of his Son Thomas, who, at the time of his father's death, was of full age, we can hardly doubt that all proper care was taken of them; and if the Tales in question had ever been inserted among the others, it is scarce conceivable that they should all have slipt out of all the Copies of this work, of which we have any knowledge or information. Nor is there any sufficient ground for imagining that so many Tales could have been suppressed by design; though such a supposition may perhaps be admitted to account for the loss of some smaller passages. See above, n. 8.

END OF VOL. I.

C. WHITTINGHAM, CHISWICK.